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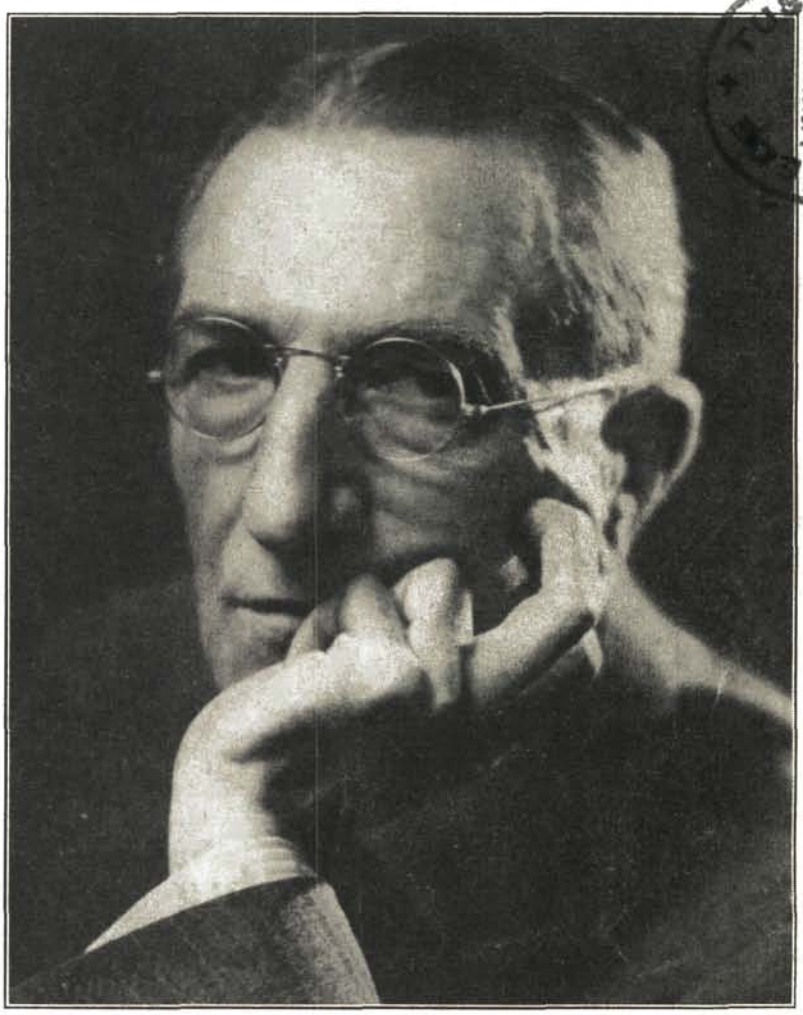

ROBERT BRIFFAULT

"The comparison of 'Europa' with 'Men of Good Will,' now in the building, is inevitable and may be briefly made. Mr. Briffault, as I have said, has worked on the grand scale, but the scale of Jules Romains is grander still. Mr. Briffault's theme, essentially, is Society. M. Romains's vaster theme is,—society. Only the difference between a large letter and a small" . . .

(See page 11)

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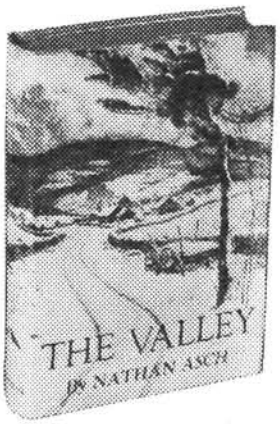

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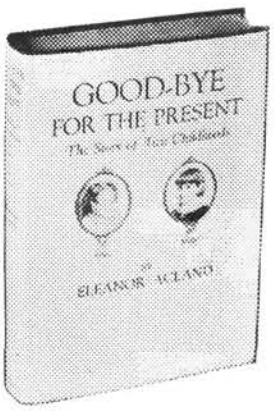

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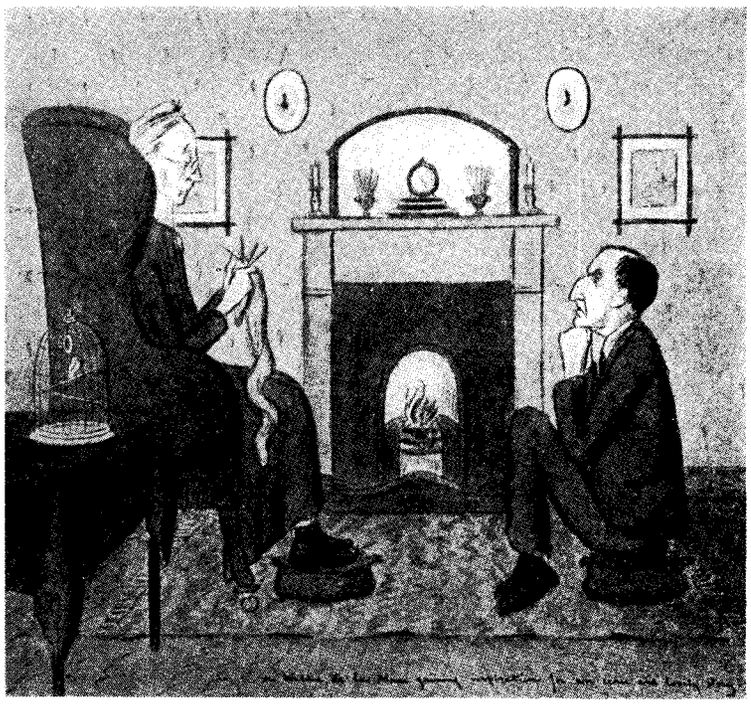
The Art That Nature Makes

BY WALTER DE LA MARE

POETRY and fiction differ widely in detail, but agree for the most part in the assurance that poetry gives delight. Three states are involved; first the seed, the conception, the imagery, the thought, the emotion in the mind of the maker of the poem; next, the words into which, as best he can, and according to a certain pattern, he translates all this; and last, the complete effect of those words when they in turn have been transmuted by the reader of them into his own thought, imagery, feeling.

The poem in words is permanent, and through them may be divined in part the infinitely complex process that went to its conceiving and making. Few readers concern themselves with this process. To like or not to like, is the usual standpoint. However that may be, the effect of any particular poem in words must vary with every individual reader, and to some degree perhaps with every renewed reading of it.



"Walter de la Mare gaining inspiration for an eerie and lovely story"—from Max Beerbohm's "Observations"

"Over that art," says Polixenes to Perdita concerning the flowers she is presenting to him—"over that art (which you say addes to Nature) is an Art That Nature makes. . . . The Art itselfe, is Nature." That is truth itself concerning poetry. We can examine and analyze the words of a poem and their effects on mind and senses to our hearts' content, and, possibly, to our brains' confusion; but any attempt, *thus and thus*, not to take to pieces, but consciously and deliberately fragment by fragment to build up what is within the mind and then to transmute it into words is clearly doomed to failure. Human "nature" and the self within, in the closest and swiftest, and in an all but inscrutable collaboration, are responsible for the one; and as to the other, even the art of revealing it in words, whether spontaneously or by deliberation, is also largely of nature: "the Art itself, is Nature." In other words, a poet is born, he is not even self-made—though with him alone rests the proof of his own gifts.

Words are not merely fixed symbols with an absolute meaning and innumerable personal connotations; they consist also of sounds; and of sounds made by the most complex and direct of all instruments—the human voice. Which of the two is the more natural, speech or singing, I cannot say; but the one can be of at least as delicate, supple, and mutable a melody and charm as the other. A poem that is a delight to hear is a delight also to utter—even if it is Bully Bottom who is reciting it to Mustardseed. In lieu of a badly needed specific term, we may call the delighting verbal sounds of a poem music. There is no one word for describing the effects of the utterance of that music on the mind and senses of the speaker. Part, too, of the pleasure in listening to "ravishing accents" or even to a fiddle seems to consist in translating the sounds heard into sounds inwardly mimicked—by the vocal organs. So with words. If, for example, we repeat heedfully and intently, "O what can ail thee Knight-at-arms, Alone and palely loitering," and alliteration is almost solely a *speech*-pleasure, we become at once cognizant of a rare rhythmical music both in the making and in the hearing of it. If not, so far as words are concerned we are either poetry-dumb, poetry-deaf, or both.

Nevertheless this verbal music remains in much a secret. It is as direct and instantaneous as our delight in color, or in dancing, or in the proportion of one thing with another. Having in his "Three Lectures on Aesthetic" said of music itself that it is "the least representative" of the arts, since its "rhythms and combinations" are "direct resemblances of emotions" Bernard Bosanquet continues: Poetry, "like the other arts, has a physical or at least a sensuous medium, and this medium is sound . . . significant sound . . Poetry no more keeps its meaning when turned into corresponding prose, than a picture or a sonata keeps its meaning in the little analyses they print in the catalogues or programs." Again, Poetry, says Myers in his "Essay on Virgil," has "that mysterious power by which . . . mere arrangement of sound" —"like some exquisite soft harmony" in Mr. Aldous Huxley's words, "apprehended by another sense"—"can convey an emotion which no one could have predicted beforehand, and which no known laws can explain." And Edgar Allan Poe: "Music when combined with a pleasurable idea is poetry; music without the idea is simply music; the idea

(*Continued on next page*)

Next Week

THE HISTORY OF MODERN CIVILIZATION
By HARRY ELMER BARNES
Reviewed by James Harvey Robinson

ROMANOFF
By LEONID SOBOLEFF
Reviewed by Nicholas Wreden

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without the music, is prose, from its very definiteness." And it was he who had the excellent fortune to be translated into French prose by no less a master of this verbal music than Stéphane Mallarmé; for prose of course has its own music as well as verse.

A strange feature in regard to this verbal "music" is that although it may give us a profound and inexplicable delight, we may yet be incapable of achieving it ourselves. But this is a commonplace, true of all the arts. For one artist that can well and truly "make" there are scores of his fellow creatures that can, as well and truly, only appreciate.

It is on the effect of its sounds alone of course that the music of a poem depends. But a poem in words depends also for its effect on the mind upon what its verbal music conveys—imagery, thought, feeling. When, then, Mr. Bernard Shaw said of Keats, in the year of his centenary, that he was "the sort of youth who calls a window a casement . . . (on paper)" his arrow went clean to the mark, though, since he uses the word literary, one may be a little less certain of his aim. Keats has many casements: "Magic casements opening on the foam Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn"; "A bright porch, and a casement ope at night To let the warm Love in"; "Full on the casement shone the wintry moon." Nevertheless, in "The Eve of St. Mark"—and in spite of the "rich antiquity" of its Minster-square—we have, "Bertha arose, and read awhile, With forehead 'gainst the window-pane."

All this was not a mere choice between synonyms, nor even due to the fact that the two objects referred to (apart from their purpose, that of giving air and light) are not the same in construction. In associations they are leagues apart, as far apart as "Give me to drink" and "Give me a drink"; and though, as Mr. Shaw says, Keats's effect is "magical," this, I think, was not his real intention. The word casement in these several contexts, both in sense and in *sound,* was the only word available to convey his meaning and serve his purpose. And this is equally true of "window" in the last quotation. Here casement would be ruinous. It was not what he *meant.*

As Marjory Fleming said in her "Sonnet"—not on Keats: "The beauties of his mind do shine And every bit is shaped so fine." And she too has her casement:

I love the morning sun to see
That makes me from the house to flee
I love the morning sun to spy
Glittering through the casement's eye.

Incidentally, the word came into its present usage in 1556 and occurs only once in the Authorized Version: "At the window of my house I looked through my casement, and behold among the simple ones, I discerned . . . a young man void of understanding"—as mere imitators of Keats are likely to be. And "So many greedy looks of young and old Through casements darted their desiring eyes." Would they dart quite so desirously and greedily through "windows"?

These verbal minutiæ are no less essential in imaginative prose. "I realize," says Mr. Wells in his Autobiography, "I realize that Being is surrounded, east, south, north, and west, above and below, by wonder. Within that frame like a little house in strange, cold, vast, and beautiful scenery, is life upon this planet." This statement, pure and unique, comes from the region in the mind called the imagination. Transpose the order even of the compass point "east" and "west" or of the group of adjectives, and something, minute it may be, but none the less vital, flickers out. The prose, too, is of the stuff of poetry. And yet, transformed into free verse, half its magic evaporates.

I realize that Being is surrounded,
East, south, north and west,
Above and below,
By wonder.
Within that frame, like a little house
In strange, cold, vast and beautiful scenery,
Is life upon this planet.

So, even with a witticism. A character in "Man and Superman," unmindful of Byron and Mary Duff, facetiously declares that "First love is only a little foolishness and a lot of curiosity," not "a lot of inquisitiveness." For even if the two words were precisely synonymous, the reiteration of *ness* and the absence in the substitute of the assonance *lot* and *os* would sadly dull the barb. William Blake supplies a characteristic variant of this comment on early love—calf-love as it is called by the stall-fed: "Then she bore Pale desire, father of Curiosity, a Virgin ever young."

It is difficult to tell to what degree Blake elaborated his own poems. His own statements differ. But in his Annotations to Lavater's "Aphorisms of Man" he added the words "Most Excellent" to, "The poet, who composes not before the moment of inspiration, and as that leaves him ceases—composes, and he alone, for all men, all classes, all ages." Concerning another aphorism, "The infinitely little constitutes the infinite difference in works of art, and in the degrees of morals and religion; the greater the rapidity, precision, acuteness, with which this is observed and determined, the more authentic, the greater the observer," he remarked, "Uneasy." By this "uneasy"—to judge from another entry, "Uneasy, but I hope to mend"—he meant apparently not that he deemed it untrue, but that he could not with assurance apply it to his own practice. That the aphorism is true of poetry can be easily proved. All that is necessary is to alter even by so much as a syllable what we accept as fine poetry, and then to observe the difference in the effect of the alteration on the mind, the imagination, and the feelings. That decided, we can then inquire: Whatever the "meaning" (its effects on us) may now be, has any poetry escaped; has any poetry been added?

Consider but a moment, for example, the following emendations, out of how many unrecorded, made by Coleridge in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." For the second line in

Her beams bemocked the sultry main
Like morning frosts yspread

he substituted, "Like April hoar-frost spread." For that in

Alone, alone, all alone,
Alone on the wide wide sea

he substituted, "Alone on a wide wide sea." And for that in

The horned Moon with one bright Star
Almost atween the tips

he substituted, first, "Within its nether tip"; and last, "Within the nether tip."

It was out of such infinitesimals as these that his creative mind built up what became at last the complete texture of his unique poem. We can explain in part the various causes of the difference in effect of each such verbal changes on the images within our mind; we can but very superficially explain the process; nor can we explore the complete and involved area and ramifications of those images. Fine wit and humor are no less dependent on fine verbal shades; but the language of poetry, which, to some minds, is far more rare and precious than either, is the most sensitive, and appeals to far profounder sensibilities.

Needless to say we may value poetry more for its ideas, its philosophy, its message, its edification than for the delight which the mere music of its language may bestow. But that music absent, poetry, in the generally accepted meaning of the word, is absent, whatever else may remain. Like all immediate appeals to our senses, mind, and being, it is a secret language, but one with scores of dialects. Poets may differ one from another as much as Dante from Verlaine, Marlowe from Crabbe, Sophocles from Clare; this power of invocation however they have in common. It haunts every language, as beauty may haunt a waterfall. A village Milton, then, may be a Milton of purest ray serene in the secrecy of his own mind, but if he is unpossessed of this secret, then mute and inglorious, or vocal and even more inglorious, he must remain.

The foregoing article is to be included in Mr. De la Mare's "Early One Morning" to be published shortly by The Macmillan Company.

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The Technique of Terror

PRISONER OF THE OGPU. By George Kitchin. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1935. $3.

RUBBER TRUNCHEON. By Wolfgang Langhof. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1935. $2.50.

Reviewed by DOROTHY THOMPSON

TERROR is not merely an inevitable accompaniment of revolution; it is an essential of its technique. By definition revolution is violent shift in power, violent change in the structure and aim of society, a process, therefore, which repudiates the legal system of the régime which it replaces and liquidates ruthlessly the controlling forces of its predecessors. Eventually it establishes its own legal system and its own social controls. Then it is no longer revolution but an established social order. Revolution is war. How long the war lasts depends upon many factors; the internal and external opposition is one; the capacity of the leadership to construct a satisfactorily functioning social order is another. And no doubt the spiritual and mental inheritance of the revolutionary order is a third. For the revolutionist is not a man born in a vacuum; however rebellious his mentality, he is a product of the system in which he was bred. If terror has been used as an instrument by the previous social order against a resurgent class this will influence the revolutionist. Russian Czarism used terror—the secret police, the agent provocateur—on a grand scale and no doubt contributed to making the Russian mind more callous and more docile toward terrorism.

But history does not judge revolutions *quasi* according to the means they use, any more than it judges wars by their horrors. It judges them by whether they release more energies than they dam, whether they result in an enlargement or a restriction of life forces. Counting decapitated heads gets you, historically speaking, nowhere. The revolutions of the eighteenth century were costly in human suffering but they eventually led to the establishment of a form of society which maintained for a century a larger number of people at a higher standard of life than any previous social systems had done in the history of the world, and this rather than Marie Antoinette's head, is the important thing about them.

It is necessary to keep some such ideas in mind when confronted by two books like these. Otherwise, one is likely to make a snap and not very useful judgment, such as "All revolutions are alike." All terrors are, to a great extent, identical. So much alike that one story of life in a concentration camp reads very like another, whether the concentration camp be in Germany, or in Russia. There is a definite technique of terror, or subjugation through fright. Both Germany and Russia have a secret police, employing vast numbers of civilian spies, operating through courts of their own, if one can dignify them by that name, and responsible to nobody except, and sometimes distantly, the revolutionary councils. Both of them use agents provocateurs, whose business it is to frame people who may be potentially dangerous. Both of them arrest on suspicion and try if they try at all, before courts in which the prosecutor like "cunning old Fury" in "Alice in Wonderland," is judge and jury at once. Both lodge their victims in concentration camps where the prisoners are made amenable to discipline by every weapon of cruelty and humiliation which can be devised. Both—like our own kidnappers—take hostages, with whom to terrify their victims by the exploitation of their best instincts. In both countries concentration camps seem to attract, as guards, men of pathological sadistic tendencies, and yet in both countries there is a certain amount of fraternization between prisoners and their keepers. Both use the technique of punishing a refractory prisoner by maltreating the whole body of prisoners. Thus, in the Kotlas penal labor camp in Siberia to which Mr. Kitchin was sentenced, a hungry prisoner stole some bread, and all his comrades were turned out half dressed to stand in the Arctic cold until the culprit should confess, and when no confession was forthcoming prisoner after prisoner was systematically beaten until one weakened and told. The culprits were then stood up half dressed in the zero weather and doused with buckets of water which froze upon them. Then they were thrown for twenty-four hours into an unheated dungeon and, of course, developed pneumonia.

Abbé

MEMBERS OF THE RUSSIAN SECRET POLICE

Standing outside the walls of the Kremlin. From "Eyes on the World" (Simon & Schuster).

Wolfgang Langhof, writing of his experiences in the Prussian concentration camp at Boergermoor, tells of how one of the prisoners hid some forbidden tobacco. Since no one confessed voluntarily all prisoners were turned out of their beds, beaten with long lathes on their bare buttocks, forced to run a gauntlet of S.S. men, and turned out in the cold to stand in night clothes until someone should confess. The cases are almost parallel, and this is but one of many similarities, George Kitchin, who was a citizen of Finland, was framed by the Soviet Political Police, and offered his freedom immediately if he would undertake espionage on behalf of the communists against the Finnish trade delegation. When he refused, every attempt was made to force him to sign a document implicating himself. This technique is common in Germany. So many communists have been offered freedom in return for spying upon their comrades that the German communist party has had to drop from its ranks and treat suspiciously everyone who has ever been arrested by the Nazis.

Moreover, the panorama of the prisoners is similar. In the communist penal camps are many communists; in the Nazi concentration camps are many Nazis. Communists who have come under communist discipline are rather better treated than non-communists, and Nazis who have fallen by the way rather better treated than non-Nazis. The Russian penal camps are a cross section of Russian society, from the lowest criminals to the most distinguished intellectuals, and so are the German concentration camps. What Langhof reports has already been told—with minor deviations—by Stefan Lorant, Karl Billinger, and others. Tchernavin's recent report of his experiences in Siberia bears out in all essentials George Kitchin's. The books are valuable to each other as corroborative evidence. But much of their detail is

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more interesting to the student of psychological pathology than to the historian of revolution.

But this is not altogether so. Although terror is a universal instrument of warfare, whether it be between nations, classes, or contending gangs, and has an established technique, and as such is not particularly interesting, the uses which terror serves are extremely important.

Now, reading Mr. Kitchin's account, and comparing it with Professor Tchernavin's, one is forced to conclude that much of the Russian terror serves no revolutionary purpose whatsoever, but is merely the instrument which a distracted régime uses to cover up its own appalling incompetencies. To make a comparison: the assassination of the Czar and his family was, however it outrages humane sympathies, a genuine revolutionary act, and a necessary one. The mere existence of a family with such powerful claims to legitimate rights of rulership endangers a new social order. But the measures constantly being taken against "wreckers" and "saboteurs" in behalf, not of the revolution but of the Five Year Plan, are another matter altogether. Mr. Kitchin describes in this book the penal labor camps in which hundreds of thousands of prisoners are being compelled under chain-gang organization to force lumber production, do railroad construction, open new territory for the exploitation of natural resources, and he accuses the government, and produces a mass of specific evidence to prove his contention, that the grandiose dreams and gigantic plans, so widely publicized in the world, often are developed by enthusiastic or ambitious political bureaucrats, thousands of miles from the actual scene of operation, who issue orders to engineers which have no regard for possibilities, who demand that workers be driven beyond human endurance so that they die in a manner most inhumane and also most inefficient —slaves after all represent an economic value—who punish criticism by banishment, failure by charges of "wrecking" and "sabotage," and who, by this sort of terror, completely paralyze the brains and will of their most valuable experts. The question which this book raises in the mind is whether the crowd of intellectuals self-appointed as the saviors of the Russian masses actually have the ability to establish a decently functioning social order.

Mr. Kitchin further, and specifically, accuses the Soviet government of wilful fraud in its representations to the outside world that lumber is not being produced in Russia by slave and prison labor. Not only does he bear out Tchernavin's statement that the OGPU sells prisoners outright to the various projects at so much a head, but he describes the ruthless—and entirely temporary—liquidation of the camps in advance of international investigators. Mr. Kitchin ought to know. He was there—and one of the prisoners.

It will be interesting to see how this book is reviewed by our own intellectuals and so-called liberals who invariably display such myopia toward the actual workings out of the Russian revolution.

Beside this account of cataclysmic, chaotic, ruthless, ignorant, tragic Russia, Langhof's account of his experiences as prisoner of the Nazis is curiously flat. The Russian revolution has the obscenity of birth, though the child may be a monstrosity. But the German revolution has the obscenity of senility. One seems outrageous, the other disgusting. In the Russian penal camps they drive men with whips to fell trees and open roads, crying Gangway for the Lord! If the Lord's representative then appears as a sly-eyed hysterical bureaucrat or a drunken bum one feels full of rage and tears. But in the German concentration camps they set men whipping each other while the guards snicker. And one feels sickness and disgust.

The Russian terror is at least terrible. Its object is to establish the masses in power and to open up and industrialize a continent. If the dictatorship of the proletariat has become the dictatorship of the dictatorship as Kitchin's book seems to indicate—a possibility, incidentally, foreseen by Marx, and feared by him—this will be failure on a heroic scale. Nor will the very failure leave Russia where it found it. But the Nazi "revolution!" This heroic mobilization of sixty-five million against six hundred thousand! This talk about an "élite" in the mouths of pink-cheeked mediocrities! This breeding of supermen by decree! This death-loving philosophy! One feels that the explanation of the Nazi revolution does not lie in history at all, but in Kraft-Ebbing.

Of the Russian revolution one is afraid. Of the Nazi revolution one is ashamed.

Dorothy Thompson, wife of Sinclair Lewis, is one of the ablest of American journalists. She has spent much time in Russia and Germany from which latter country she was recently ejected.

No Words Can Snare

By Mary Hallet

NO words can snare the wonder
of this hour!
Who has the power
To separate the fragrance from the flower
And with his hands
To weave its loveliness in perfumed
strands?
Who understands
A way to snatch the spider's filmy lace
From its own place
On dew-drenched grass, and then restore
its grace
Some other where?
Thus inexpressible the hour we share!
There is no fair
Or haunting syllable so limitless
It can confess
The measure of a moment's happiness.

Blood Brother to Baron Corvo

RICHARD SAVAGE. By Gwyn Jones. New York: The Viking Press. 1935. $2.50.

Reviewed by Jeremy Lord

THE unhappy history of Richard Savage, shoemaker's apprentice, poet and playwright, sponger and adventurer, who spent his life vainly seeking to be recognized as the bastard son of the fourth Earl Rivers and the Countess of Macclesfield, and who was finally buried in the year 1743 at the expense of a kindly Bristol prison keeper, is known to most of us only through the long and sympathetic biography in Samuel Johnson's "Lives of the Poets." Many of the writing fraternity, reading Savage's story there, must have said to themselves: Here is a novel for the taking. But Mr. Gwyn Jones, so far as I know, is the first writer to give substance to the thought.

He has given it substance in a novel running to more than six hundred pages; a novel that is decidedly overwritten at times, as a result of the author's attempt to reproduce eighteenth century eloquence; a novel that seems sadly underwritten at others, because of his refusal or inability to recreate the physical aspects and the intellectual atmosphere of early eighteenth century London. But, whatever its shortcomings may be, this is a book that must interest all readers who are subject to the fascinations of literary history.

The Savage that we find in this novel is, in temperament and characteristic actions, the figure made known to us by Johnson's "Life." Johnson provided a key sentence to an understanding of the man when he wrote: "It was his peculiar happiness, that he scarcely ever found a stranger, whom he did not leave a friend; but it must likewise be added, that he had not often a friend long, without obliging him to become a stranger." And again he struck to the roots of Savage's character when he observed:

> He appeared to think himself born to be supported by others, and dispensed from all necessity of providing for himself; he therefore never prosecuted any scheme of advantage, nor endeavored even to secure the profits which his writings might have afforded him. His temper was, in consequence of the dominion of his passions, uncertain and capricious; he was easily engaged, and easily disgusted; but he is accused of retaining his hatred more tenaciously than his benevolence.

In Mr. Jones's narrative, Dr. Johnson's judgments are translated into action. We see Savage continually self-defeated by the perverseness of his own character. We see him turning with insolence and abuse upon those who would help him,—upon such as Lord Tyrconnel, Alexander Pope, and Aaron Hill. It was really impossible to do anything for the man. He

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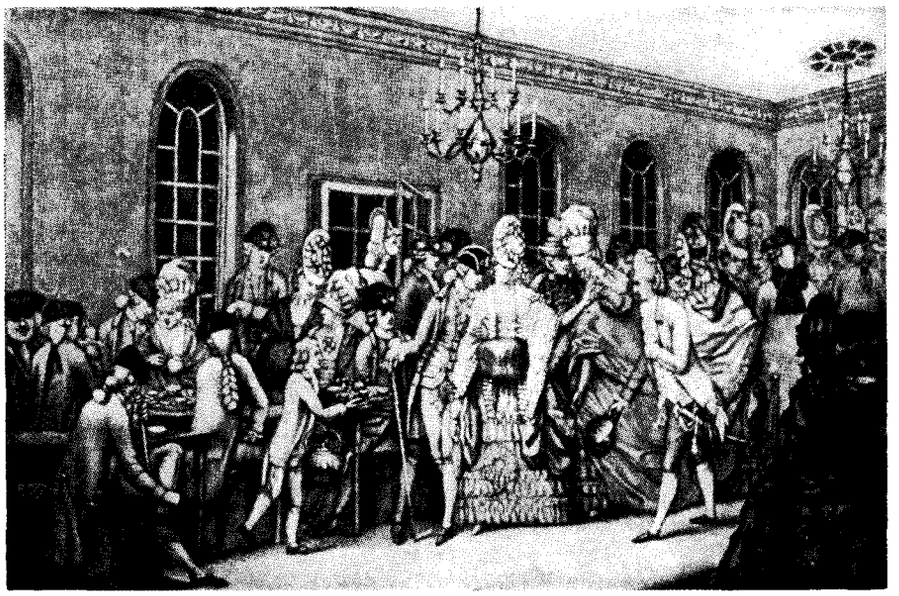

THE SOCIETY THAT RICHARD SAVAGE KEPT IN TURMOIL
Picture reproduced from "Johnson's England"
(Oxford University Press)

expected favors from everyone, but the favors done him invariably moved him to resentment, contempt, and recrimination. In this inability to respond properly to kindness, Richard Savage was blood brother to the self-styled Baron Corvo. To extend a hand of sympathy to either of these tormented writers was to put one's fingers in the way of bared teeth. Savage, of course, sincerely believed that he was the son of the Countess of Macclesfield (later Mrs. Brett), and he considered her rejection of his claim a monstrous manifestation of unnatural motherhood. To a certain extent, then, his embittered conduct may be understood if not condoned. Johnson, too, believed firmly in the justice of Savage's claim, as did many of his contemporaries. So it is interesting to note that Mr. Jones does not commit himself on this point: he makes it clear that his protagonist believed, but that is all. By withholding his own opinion regarding this vexed question, the author preserves a valuable detachment and avoids a kind of controversy that would have been unavoidable in a biography, but which would have been out of place in a novel.

But the mere fact that he found it advisable to sidestep such an issue indicates the difficulties of his hybrid form, and I think that it is fair to say that in aiming at his double target he has missed the twin bullseyes. The biographer has kept the novelist from enjoying a free hand, and the novelist has used elbow-room that would have been valuable to the biographer. The style and texture of the book alternate between what is proper to one literary form and what is proper to another. Curt, factual statements alternate with full, imaginative scenes. But at no point is the background of the story satisfactorily developed. Never are we made to see and smell and hear the London in which Richard Savage suffered the agonies of Grub Street and enjoyed the company of the great. Certain characters who were of importance to him in real life, such as Mrs. Oldfield and Mr. Wilks, are given cursory treatment in this version of his life; and Mr. Jones has done no more with Pope than to affix his name as a label to various actions and letters.

I have said already that "Richard Savage" is overwritten in parts and underwritten in others, but the net result is that it is far, far too long. And when one finds the tale, in its later portions, less moving than it should be, one is pertinently reminded of Johnson's remark regarding Savage's closing years: "His story, though in reality not less melancholy, was less affecting, because it was no longer new."

On the credit side of the ledger, Mr. Jones has done well with the characters of Rawsley and Mengels, concerning whom his fancy was free to roam; and he has been happy, too, with the comparatively minor figures of Colonel Brett and Aaron Hill. The meeting of Brett and Hill and Savage is admirably handled, and two of the best written scenes in the book, unimportant as they are, are between the colonel and his wife. The verbatim account of Savage's trial for the murder of Sinclair, which holds a place of honor midway in the narrative, is spirited and dramatic. The time spent by the poet in Tyrconnel's house is more vividly realized than many other portions of his life.

Finally, there must be many readers who have never before heard of the author of "The Wanderer," "Love in a Veil," and "Sir Thomas Overbury," who will be grateful to Mr. Jones for having introduced them to so unusual a character and so strange a history.

Young English Drifter

ENGLAND MADE ME. By Graham Greene. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1935. $2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

THIS is a rather difficult book to review. It is a novel certainly better written than the average, it presents some interesting characters, its Stockholm background is new to me and engaged my attention. It starts off extremely well, with Kate waiting for her brother in the London railway station, a most vivid piece of description, even as the appearance of the ne'er-do-well wandering brother, and his disjointed thoughts and memories at first hold the interest closely. Erik Krogh, the great magnate of humble beginnings, whose secretary and mistress Kate is, soon enters the scene, since Kate takes her brother Anthony to Stockholm to get him a job. Brother and sister are twins, Kate half an hour the older. Their love for each other is so strong and their intuitive knowledge of each other so deep, particularly the sister's concerning her brother, as to constitute almost an incestuous relationship. Kate is the capable, successful one. Anthony is unsuccessful and unable to cope with life. He has his own strange code. There are some things he will not do and yet other things that, surprisingly enough, he would have no compunction about doing—like blackmailing Krogh at the end of the story, could he have accomplished it. One of Krogh's devoted henchmen puts him out of the way for good; and Kate, who was on the point of acquiescing in Krogh's proposal to marry her at last, cuts herself loose from him. In Stockholm Anthony had had a love affair with a travelling English girl and was about to throw up his job with Krogh and return to England to see his girl again. He possesses a nostalgia for England, deeply rooted in his charlatan nature, a strange, redeeming feeling.

That is as much of the story as should be vouchsafed. There are other good characters, notably Minty the old Harrovian, concerning whom a whole story could have been made. His particular kind of defeat has gleams of humor. Anthony's defeat comes through the flabby streak in his nature. Kate's defeat is brought on by circumstance. In spite of his success and power, Krogh's inner defeat springs from his origins. The man Anderson represents the proletariat, and never has a Chinaman's chance.

Mr. Greene is chiefly interested in defeat and futility. I don't think he has quite known what story he was writing. He seems to lose his sense of direction. And in the end all one can say is that, well as he can write, he has only succeeded in giving us a novel with flashes of unusual characterization.

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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Americans Own America

STATEMENTS have been made from time to time, notably in a recent article in *The Publishers Weekly*, that Americans of the old British stock are no longer good readers, fail, indeed to keep pace with the descendants of other races, notably the Jews. It is probably impossible to prove or disprove this contention, yet the experience of most editors, publishers, booksellers, and teachers of English would doubtless bear it out. If true, is the fact significant? We believe it to be highly significant, but not of the general decadence of the Old American which recent and sometimes rather scurrilous writers of foreign origin have maintained.

The perennial American tendency to twist the now somewhat lax tail of the British lion appears in this discussion, but disregard that remnant of the pioneer's resentment against his London masters. Let us note rather that it is not really an English stock whose posterity is supposed to be losing its intellectual curiosity, but rather a highly mingled racial strain in which English is a vital element, and Scotch, Welsh, Irish, German, and, in a lesser degree, French have their place. All you can prove of the Old American stock as a race is that there is very little South European and not much of the Catholic nations in it. What is characteristic, and hence important, is not its blood, but its culture, which is unquestionably English in origin, modified by the circumstances of a new country, but surprisingly little affected, if one takes half century periods, by the cultures of the rest of Europe.

Now it is questionable whether the English as a nation have ever been great readers. Individuals, yes, small classes, yes, but not that middle class, upper and lower, from which our dominant English strain certainly came. The Scotch have been great readers, especially of English literature. The Germans that came to us were many of them great readers, but changed their German for English. The Irish are bad readers, even in English literature. What happened in this country was the slow shifting of the cultural interests of many races into the English-speaking area, where many English (for the English have been profuse writers) some Scotch, fewer Irish, and an increasing number of Americans of all stocks, but until recently chiefly the old American, have produced the books that all have read.

The question, therefore, and it is a very interesting one, is not whether the Old American has changed his rating as a book reader, but whether he is losing his dominance over the culture (and therefore the books) which we all read. Is American literature (and hence American reading) becoming less British, or more accurately, less Old American?

And the answer is that for certainly two hundred years this is precisely what has been taking place, sometimes slowly, sometimes fast. We have taken great drafts of foreign culture, French deism in the early nineteenth century, German philosophy later, then Orientalism both philosophic and romantic, then the new imperialistic literature of England which had become by the nineties a semi-foreign country, then Russian. And parallel to this continuing movement each new racial group in our polity has come to the articulate stage, producing writers who, using standard English, bring nevertheless something that is not American only since it carries a little of their racial origins with it. The Germans and Irish began early, now it is the Scandinavians, the Jugo-Slavians, and most of all the German, Russian, and Polish Jews. Soon it will be the Italians, the Greeks, and the Spanish of the Southwest. Belatedly, but with most interesting promise, the native Indian is already here. Nevertheless, through all and with all our culture has remained definitely English in the same sense that our language, with its real differentiations, has remained English.

But if the Old American falls behind in his reading will he continue to keep an English-speaking culture dominant in what was once entirely, save for the Indian, his America? It is easy to generalize, and generalize wrongly, upon this question. If the Old Americans, regarded as a racial group, sink below their norm in the search for ideas, they, as a racial group, will unquestionably suffer. Many think that they are already suffering, losing power, losing flexibility. But the group in this controversy means very little unless it becomes so small as to be necessarily unproductive, which is not likely in spite of the cries over declining birthrate. What counts is individuals. If they continue to create, it is not probable that the general nature of our culture will change materially, though it will certainly be modified as it has in the past. And it is certain that they are creating. Indeed, one has only to draw up a list of the really important writers, not only in belles lettres, but in history, sociology, economics, and related cultural fields, who have come through, who do exercise a dominance, and are to be regarded as standard for our time, to see that in the book world at least, the so-called Old American is holding his own, is still controlling the culture of a country that becomes more, not less, English-speaking with the years. That there are powerful writers whose racial and culture origins are entirely different, and whose backgrounds of experience are in some respects also quite different, from the type American as he has been known in the past, is neither a menace nor a portent. It indicates merely that we are still a nation in the making whose culture, if it is not likely to forget its traditions, is also unlikely to stiffen or grow sterile for want of new blood.

Le Feu Barbusse, who died last week, will be remembered as a man of one book. He is the author of "Le Feu," the first book about the great war which (while the fighting was still on) gave to the man and woman living on quiet streets the smell, taste, feel of trench warfare. And he was the first to reveal, what others still are doing, the curious psychology of the man beaten down, dulled, bored, and disillusioned by war, who nevertheless is hourly aware that this is the climax, perhaps even, if he lives through it, the last climax of his earthly experience "Le Feu" had reverberations that ran through nations. It was a pacifist book, but it was more than that, for it was a good book, in which the soldier was no embodiment of a thesis, but a human being, humorous, pathetic, brave, lost in a sudden chaos that he did not pretend to understand.

Ten Years Ago

Back in 1925, *The Saturday Review* recommended "Sous L'Etoile des Soviets" by Georges Popoff, as being written "*quite apparently without prejudice . . . touched with an undercurrent of human feeling,*" and called attention to its "*sincere objectivity.*" At that time, M. Popoff stated that "*the secret of the Bolshevists' power is . . . in keeping the masses in the deepest ignorance of conditions within and without the country, passive, . . . still serfs in spirit.*"

Today

The Editors call your attention to Dorothy Thompson's review of "Prisoner of the OGPU," by George Kitchin (see page 5), and particularly to the following paragraph: "*Mr. Kitchin further, and specifically, accuses the Soviet government of wilful fraud in its representations to the outside world that lumber is not being produced in Russia by slave and prison labor. . . . The OGPU sells prisoners outright to the various projects at so much a head.*"

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Letters to the Editor: *The Literati in Debate*

A Rocky Mountain Conference

SIR: The unsettled question of formula *vs.* complete individuality in the short story was stirred into life at the Rocky Mountain Writers' Conference which ended its sixth annual three-weeks session in Boulder, Colorado, on August 9. One hundred and fifteen writers from thirty states listened impartially or allied themselves with the two schools of thought represented by the instructors.

On the side of definite pattern were Mrs. Blanche Y. McNeal, aide to a succession of budding authors from which have come Hope Williams Sykes ("Second Hoeing"), Lenore Mattingly Weber (the Mr. Gold and Globe City stories), and many others; and Mignon Baker, ex-newspaper-woman and literary critic with a similar record.

Form without formula was supported by Martha Foley, Whit Burnett, and Edward Davison, program director of the conference.

Both schools of thought claimed Robert Frost and Thomas Wolfe. Robert Penn Warren, southern poet-editor-novelist, who conducted the conferences on the novel, alone of the lecturers stayed clear of the argument.

Newspaper and advertising writers, housewives, school teachers, people with over 200 publications to their credit and people with none heard discussions of poetry, novels, short stories, and feature articles; entered into spirited round-table conferences; attended formal lectures by the instructors; laughed at Princeton's Shakespeare authority. Venerable poet Frost's gentle witticisms in a New England voice won the hearts of his principally Mid-Western hearers, and in an address remarkable for its honesty, frankness, and enormous effect on his audience, novelist Wolfe demonstrated the usefulness of his rugged frame to his dominating, America-inspired, detail-hungry mind.

A CONFERENCE MEMBER.

Boulder, Colo.

Donald Evans

SIR:—I am very anxious to get in touch with the literary executor of Donald Evans, as I wish to include a letter of his in my biography of Amy Lowell, to be published this October. I have been unable to locate him; will you therefore be so good as to publish this letter, in hopes that he will communicate with me?

S. FOSTER DAMON.

Brown University,
Providence, R. I.

Dickens in 1867

SIR:—Reading in a recent issue the letter "Dickens and Israfel" I can say "ditto" to Mr. Walbridge. Going to London, a boy of 15, I first saw Dickens at the Farewell Dinner given to him on his second visit to America. That was in 1867, at the Freemasons Hall in Eudece Street. Bulwer Lytton presided. I was there, not as guest of course. I was about 18 then, and it remains in my life—never to be forgotten. On coming home from my work in the city I often met Dickens in the Strand, going to his office in Wellington Street, and at that time he certainly dressed as Mr. Allen presents him in Philadelphia. Velvet coat and vest, bright tie, gold chain, with charms and rings, and I remember them all, though it is more than 65 years ago. I have a number of pictures of Dickens, from his youthful days to the sixties, and all show him in the dress of the period in which they were taken. Mr. Allen must have mixed up Dickens's dress of the forties, with that of the sixties.

A. H. HEWARD.

Burnwood, N. Y.

"IT'S REALLY THE BIBLE, BUT I PUT ON A 'LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER' COVER SO THAT PEOPLE WON'T TALK."

Vermont in Fiction

SIR:—Having been born in Vermont, where I lived for nearly thirty years, until my work as a newspaper man took me to New York and thence to New Jersey, your editorial in the Aug. 24 issue, "Fiction Searches the Map," with its mention of Vermont, caught—and held—my eye. "Vermont is overwritten." "We are a little weary—of Vermont farmers" —you write. It would be a great personal service if you would give me a list of fiction titles, at least, which have Vermont as a setting. For some forty years I've been watching for them and reading those I saw, but they have been few and far between. If you are "a little weary of Vermont Farmers" it probably is because —so far as I have read—he is not to be found in fiction. Not, that is, the real farmer. Nor is a real characterization of any other class of real Vermonters easy to find in fiction. Most of my relatives are Vermont farmers. I spend my vacations on my father-in-law's farm, I've worked on farms, played on farms, wooed on a farm, and married a farm girl in the "parlor" of a farm house. I was a newspaper man in Vermont. I've traveled the state from Canada to Massachusetts and from Champlain to the Connecticut. I fancy I know Vermonters. . . .

With your editorial, otherwise, I heartily agree. New Hampshire has been sadly neglected. Rural New York and the hinterland of New Jersey offer rich fields for the student of character and types. Let's have a few novels based on folks as they are in some of these sections.

GUY M. CHASE.

Mozart Letters

SIR:—I am preparing a complete edition in English of the Mozart family correspondence, based on that of Professor Ludwig Schiedermair, published in 1914 by George Muller, Leipzig. I should be grateful if any of your readers who are in possession of unpublished letters of Mozart or his family would kindly place them at my disposal. They will be copied and returned at once and treated with the greatest care while in my possession.

EMILY ANDERSON.

38 Arkwright Road,
London N. W. 3.

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Noble and Defeated

SLAVES COTTAGE. By George Locke Howe. New York: Coward-McCann. 1935. $2.

Reviewed by VICTORIA LINCOLN

FOR one who knows Rhode Island, its landscape, so special and fine, so closely a part of the human scene, its foreign population, Portuguese, Italian, French, and Irish, its run-down natives and, above all, its moribund aristocracy and its curious political history, the stuff of a great novel is lying to hand. It is not, however, the stuff of an easy novel. Material so subtle and complex is to be approached only after profound preparation, in fasting and prayer. Good material does not make a novel. It may even destroy one. I think that it has destroyed "Slaves Cottage."

This is the story of the Vandeleur family, heirs of the old slave trade, isolated in their decay although the town with its mill and its shipyard lies at their door. Like fishes in a cloudy tank the Vandeleurs swim vaguely before us; the old man, the tyrant, and his preposterous little wife; Henry, their gentle, thwarted son and his Rosalind, tubercular and dying of malnutrition and inadequate care through old James's greed and lingering will to power, and their young daughter Helen, who has never been to the movies in her life. Apparently, in Mr. Howe's mind, the Vandeleurs stand for something noble and defeated, but it is something that he is content to leave undefined. It would be impertinent to say of a novel which has been, its publishers admit, eleven years in preparation, that it is half thought out and half felt. We can only say that for us, it is half expressed.

Mr. Howe's leisurely method of creation may be responsible for his lack of success. It appears to have given him such an overfamiliarity with his material as to create in his mind the illusion of an equal familiarity in the reader; and in his intent to leave much implicit, he has left nearly everything unsaid.

GEORGE LOCKE HOWE

And this same leisure has trapped him into a profounder error. It has led him to consider as static a situation which is, in the highest degree, fluid. Mr. Howe started his novel in prohibition days, boom days; but he presents the material gathered through eleven years as though it were the gleanings of yesterday. This makes for discrepancies that are not only sociological but emotional. He presents his characters not in bold, romantic outline, but as the creatures of a locale and a set of social conditions,—and with these he is at no pains to put the reader in touch. Of course, this can only result in his book's being neither social document, artificial drama, nor good red herring.

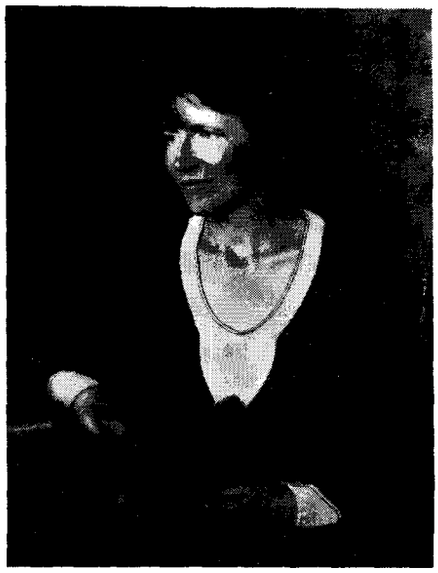
The book, nevertheless, gets off to a good start. There is a family situation, a second and third generation dying of dry rot under the hand of a first. Here in itself are the makings of a good and terrible book. But Mr. Howe resolves it by a pattern plot resting upon a mayoral election and a love affair as light as breath. Henry's old friend, Jasper Fell, visits Slaves Cottage. He counsels Henry to go into local politics, and his son Tommy falls in love with Helen.

What follows is flimsy to a degree. Henry runs for Mayor. He does it, so far as we are told, to conquer his personal loneliness, his sense of isolation, and to return local leadership to the big house "where it belongs." His opponent is an Irishman. If he loses, we expect dimly, there will be graft; and what is worse, Henry will be overcome by his loneliness. This is the election of melodrama, and our minds, as the time has trained them into more active political interest, cannot take it.

The love story is like it. Helen and Tommy, after slight acquaintance, are in love. But when Tommy is told by a maiden lady whom he has met once before that Helen, on the eve of his last departure from Slaves Cottage, kissed another man, he sails immediately for Paris without seeing her again. It is a theatre situation, only to be mended by a theatre remedy. A deathbed letter from Rosalind recalls him, to save Helen from a loveless marriage, and she escapes into a suitable match, as the Portuguese band appears on the lawn to announce the election of Henry.

"Slaves Cottage" is a baffling book. In spite of all this one keeps on feeling that if some day Mr. Howe would spend less time and more energy that he could write a novel about his neck of the woods that would be worth remembering.

Victoria Lincoln won wide favor in the literary world with her first novel, "February Hill," published last year. She has spent much of her life in Rhode Island.



ESTHER FORBES

A Perfect Lady

MISS MARVEL. By Esther Forbes. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1935. $2.50.

Reviewed by HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

MISS FORBES is one of those American writers whose work shows how dangerous it is to generalize about a literature. At a time when American fiction is supposed to be sprawling, vigorous, overflowing with subject matter, and disdainful of refinement, her books are fine, restrained (with one exception), almost too tidy, and suggesting the art of the miniature rather than the mural. She belongs with Thornton Wilder, Robert Nathan, with the good short story teller, and less obviously with Willa Cather, rather than with the red-blooded boys, or with the gland-and-hormone school, or with the horny-handed mob of the proletariat. The difference seems to be that she and her kind are more interested in significance than in behaviorism. Not life as it looks nowadays, but some essence to be drawn from it, stirs her imagination. I am not arguing merits, but merely stating that only a rash critic will try to describe contemporary American fiction in a single category.

But one merit these books, and her book, can claim—easy reading. You do not have to digest a population before you can guess what it is all about. She has a theme and sticks to it. She has a style and controls it. She knows what she is doing and does it.

The theme of "Miss Marvel" is well conceived, but a little thin—which also is characteristic of all this miniature work, especially the short story. Angelica Marvel is the "Cousine Bette" of New England, but what a difference! She is the New England spinster—sentimental, prudish, snobbish, pathological, and always genteel—shown to us on one thread of narrative from lovely girlhood to disordered old age. And as there is no

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strength in her, no tenacity except the desire to be respectable, no real character, her story, though finely done, is neither "gripping" nor "devastating"—but only revealing and significant. Angelica is in love with a dream man and when he appears is afraid of flesh and blood. Angelica is moved from New England to post-bellum Charleston and to the Middle West, yet wears an impregnable armor of romantic respectability wherever she goes. Gwen, her sister, sacrifices her youth to the tubercular, atheistic son of the minister, and after his death lives upon the memory of sacrifice. And so they grew old and crazy together.

What I like about Miss Forbes's art is the delicate precision with which she pricks in her environment of surrounding characters. Here is a recognizable town, interesting not just because it is true, but because it has personalities worth knowing about.

What I dislike in this book is a curious infection which this skilful artist has contracted from the gland-and-hormone school. It is perfectly true that Angelica's glands were at war with her inhibitions, that in youth they pushed her into inconsistencies; that neglected they did queer things to her mind; that as they aged and her arteries and her brain fibre with them, other natural results followed which spelled not only "too late for love," but also death and decay in the citadel of life. Perfectly true, but unnecessarily disagreeable for anyone over forty, and quite irrelevant once the point has been made. Miss Forbes cannot let it alone. She stages two dramas—one in the town and one in the anatomy of Angelica Marvel. It may be good biology, but it is a little too much like dressing chickens in the parlor. This, however, is incidental in an excellently written book. It is one way, I suppose, of handling the sex interest in an old maid's story.

The Days of Ignorance

EUROPA. By Robert Briffault. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1935. $2.75.

Reviewed by BEN RAY REDMAN

THIS first novel by the author of "The Mothers," "Psyche's Lamp," and "Rational Evolution," is on the grand scale, for in it Mr. Briffault has attempted nothing less than to present a panorama of European society, with its pleasures, its extravagances, and its vices, as it existed during the decades immediately preceding the World War. The author's opinion of that society is succinctly expressed in his sub-title, "The Days of Ignorance," and his long book, of five hundred large pages, is merely an elaboration of the phrase.

Let it be said at once that it is an immensely interesting and thoroughly informed elaboration, set down with a scientific dispassion that excludes both sentimentality and bitterness. Mr. Briffault has written neither propaganda nor a treatise on cause and effect; he has simply, in the guise of fiction, written social history that explains itself. Anyone who wishes may, without the slightest cerebral effort, find a lesson in "Europa," but only an extremely innocent person will believe that the world at large ever heeds such lessons. Mr. Briffault has brilliantly described the suicide of a class,—the exploiters, as they are called in the inexact jargon of the day,—and he has given us glimpses of the awakening consciousness and growing strength of the exploited during the early years of the twentieth century. His honest presentation of obvious facts should endear him to the warriors who are fighting and writing on one side of the class struggle; but the historically minded reader knows that every class, system, and civilization carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction, and that future historians will be confronted by the task of recording the apparently suicidal death of other classes and other systems.

Mr. Briffault has lavished most of his attention and the large majority of his pages upon Society with an initial capital letter, upon the royalty, nobility, aristocracy, and untitled members of the European *haut monde*, whose glittering dance of death reached its inevitable end in the summer of 1914. His panorama includes occasional views of other worlds than the so-called great world: the English public school tradition is shown in its unalterable petrifaction; we are present at the celebration of a British middle-class Christmas; we overhear the philosophic arguments of Cambridge undergraduates. But, for the most part, the reader's time is spent in luxurious Italian villas and great London houses, in Paris drawing-rooms and playgrounds of the Côte d'Azur, in German castles and provincial courts, and in the gay nocturnal haunts of pre-war Berlin.

The extravagance and vicious corruption of the Russian nobility, flinging away its wealth abroad, sets the tone of the narrative, and the pleasure-seeking Russians, goading their lusts with exotic and ingenious barbs, dominate the book.

Characters by the hundreds move through the pages of "Europa," at least by name. The majority of the minor characters are real people who appear with their proper names and titles, while others, who play more important parts, wear only transparent disguises. The multitude of names gives the reader the sense of moving always through a crowd, and in certain scenes the lists of persons present become as boring as the similar lists of the society columns. But Mr. Briffault handles his crowds well, and he knows how to make his characters speak, whether they are engaging in solemn argument or in scandalous chit-chat. His descriptions are lavish but never overdone, and he is equally at home in the field of the mind and the field of the senses. There is much in his book that will shock those who are still capable of being shocked; but all that he has to say is essential to his narrative. Granting him his subject, you must grant him his candor and his liberties.

The comparison of "Europa" with "Men of Good Will," now in the building, is inevitable and may be briefly made. Mr. Briffault, as I have said, has worked on the grand scale, but the scale of Jules Romains is grander still. Mr. Briffault's theme, essentially, is Society. M. Romains's vaster theme is,—society. Only the difference between a large letter and a small.

FROM THE JACKET DESIGN OF "MISS MARVEL."

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The Bowling Green by Christopher Morley

Mandarin on the Road

Editor's Note: Further translations

I PROMISED further notes on my explorations. This time my host determined on an enormous detour to avoid driving through New York City. He showed me a note printed on the map of Socony (one of these people's chief cartographers). Of the region including New York, Newark, Jersey City, Montclair, Morristown, etc. the map said warningly "This area is distorted." I was glad therefore that we went another way. Besides, a direct route would have taken us through Parsippany, which I do not know how to pronounce.

On a peaceful Sunday afternoon we set out. My friend had his engine filled with some new kind of lubricant said to contain Castor Oil. The local garage commended it, and my friend, long experienced in domestic matters, liked the idea. Castor Oil had been good for the children, why not for the vehicle?

It is instructive for me to travel with M., for though in many ways a typical American, operose and credulous, he has (when away from work) occasional flashes of irony or doubt. For instance his method of finding his way through the reticulated road system of Westchester County. The only thing to do, he says, is pretend you're going to DANBURY; then, when no one is looking, you can turn off and head somewhere else. This is symbolic of much in American life.

We took the Oyster Bay-Stamford ferry. M. is always hungry as soon as he starts on a trip, so aboard the *Sankaty* we had crackers and pop. He said he realized now that he was Grown Up, for he could not finish a bottle of cream soda. "Thirty years ago I thought this stuff was better than champagne."—In American literature, however, both cream soda and champagne are more esteemed than the still wines of deep vintage.

In Stamford a policeman with peremptory gesture forbade us turning left on the Boston Post Road, so we were carried some way eastward by the polyphloisboian Sunday traffic; Bostonians, I suppose, frantic to get home. This highway is rated Number 1 of the United States; avoid it. What would Cotton Mather and other of its early travelers think of it now? Particularly I am always shocked by the long platform-trucks on which new motor cars are piled up. . . . Eventually we were able to find our way to delightful road 137. This passes through the pretty country behind Stamford much favored by the people of arts and letters. As Mr. Heywood Broun (one of their philosophic mandarins) has said, in that neighborhood you cannot throw a stone in any direction without hitting a writer; he added this would not be a bad idea.

The obliquity of the inhabitants is imitated by the roads themselves. "As crooked as number 22" is an old folk-saying in the region of Katonah. I have heard that more poets live along road 22 than any other highway (of whom Miss Edna Millay is probably my favorite; she has something of our Chinese melancholy and brevity). Another interesting habit of road 22 is the way it skirts the edge of New England all the way up but warily avoids ever crossing the frontier. M. tells me that you can follow it to Lake Champlain and the Canadian border; and that a great deal of poetry came down that way in bottles during the consulship of Volstead.

We were overcome by dark near Pawling. My host, who has a good eye for a wayside inn of the right sort, spotted Broadmeadows, a spacious old house where we lay in comfort. A huge barn adjoining is used in summer as a theatre. Young actors seek to improve themselves in their profession by playing in vacant barns and wharves during the vacation. This gives entertainment to the summer colonists and spares the New York theatre many superfluous versions of the favorite American play; which invariably proves that the husband and wife really did like each other after all, but that the husband is the juice of a tree. (I have forgotten the exact word, and my dictionary is not at hand.) As the inn kitchen was not working we ate at a Log Cabin down the road. Log Cabins are placed frequently by the American wayside, to remind these people of their primitive beginnings; as the cooking would also do. My host's usual order is 2 oldfashioned cocktails and the Western sandwich (which, like the civilization for which it is named, is sown with nuggets of enduring onion). I was wondering if it was the latter which kept him awake a while. No; conscientious motorist that he is, he was brooding that he had parked the car, inside the stable of the inn, in such position that it would be difficult to back out. If you find an American lying awake at night you may be sure it is some practical problem that besets him. . . .

There is no more excellent feeling than the early morning start, after coffee and eggs, in a willing car and unknown road ahead. My goodnatured host and his charming lady, seeing my eye brighten upon that landscape, my nostril expand to the sweet air of late summer, rallied me on my exhilaration. The Old Mandarin's perfectly happy they said; slept, fed, and transported, now he gazes about to see what he can find wrong with our civilization. To which I offered my usual reply, that one makes fun of that which one loves. We diverted from argument to congratulate Road 22 on its narrow escape. A sharp curve led us to a signpost which said BOSTON CORNERS, and added "The geographic remoteness of this district of 1040 acres led Massachusetts to cede it to New York in 1855." As a bumper against Massachusetts the State of New York has here put one of its magnificent State Parks, the Taconic Reservation. There are 70

(*Continued on page* 14)

THE QUEEN'S HOUSE, FRENCH ASYLUM
(*but long ago demolished*)

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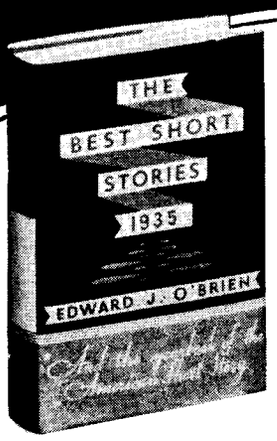
THE BEST SHORT STORIES - 1935



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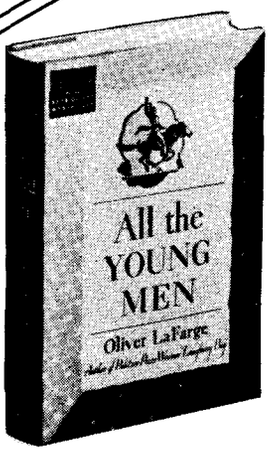

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(*Continued from page* 12)

of these in all; for 50 years now this State has been working to preserve its forests, waterfalls and choice areas of natural beauty for the unspoiled enjoyment of the public. This indeed is a social achievement which I heartily applaud. Mr. Keating, who runs the general store and P. O. at Copake Falls (at the entrance to Taconic Park) gave me a booklet describing all the New York State Parks; it is well worth study. (EDITOR'S NOTE: published gratis by the State Council of Parks, Albany, N. Y.)

We drove up into the beautiful forests of the Taconic range, along a brook oddly named *Bash Bish*—perhaps the Indians' imitation of the sound of tumbling water. High in those mountain solitudes we visited a true philosopher, M.'s friend Professor W., a mathematician from McGill University, who had rented a cottage for the summer. In that keen air and wide sunshine he was meditating on the Dynamics of a Rigid Particle; and exemplifying it also, for his household, disregarding both Standard and Daylight times, lived by some special horology of their own which they had brought from Montreal. Consequently though ourselves had only lately breakfasted it was their time for lunch. In the sunshine outside the cottage sat another scientist from Montreal, basking comfortably in shorts and devotedly studying a huge book. This can be nothing less than Astronomical Tables, we thought, but it proved to be some technical encyclopedia of Stocks and Bonds. "What a grand way to spoil a perfect vacation," M. exclaimed; the scientist replied (a little sadly, I thought) "It's a case of trying to protect some investments."

Such full blessing of highland air and sunshine, I thought, would protect an even more valuable investment.

Our next big event was crossing the new Rip Van Winkle Bridge, one of the many "Gateways" to the Catskill Mountains. The pontiff at the Rip Van Winkle toll-gate was so courteously pleased to see us that I got the impression (wrong, perhaps) that this noble structure is not doing as much business as they had hoped. Thence we plunged into the hills. Lunch at a Log Cabin was ill chosen, for after roasted chicken-thigh, beer, pie, and ice cream, my host became very sleepy at the wheel. A glazed stupor in his eye, an occasional swerve on a winding road, were not reassuring. His mental associations are mostly of a simple kind and what really brought him to was finding Grand Gorge. From this place, it appears, came his household milk (it seems a long way) when he was living in a New York apartment. Every night, visiting the ice-box, he would observe bottle caps printed GRAND GORGE. This, he said, always seemed an appropriate name for his midnight gluttony. This topic woke him up. Also, when we turned off at Stamford (a different Stamford) and down towards Delhi and Walton, we saw Bear Spring Mountain on the map. Was this the Bear Spring that supplies water to so many offices in the city? How many beautiful stenographers and young clerks have drunk from those big bubbling green carboys (he said); and have made the office cooler on occasion for appointing subsequent rendezvous. If this were the authentic Bear Spring, every office manager should make pilgrimage to it.

. . . Upstate New York, not only in its place names but also in its urban architecture, evidently underwent a strong palladian or demirep-classic influence about a hundred years ago. The balconied portico of the custard-colored Clinton House in Ithaca is a charming example. It is a comfortable hotel; perhaps its pretty waitresses (who are keen about books) can persuade the management to put reading lamps by the beds. It is amusing to see somewhere on the main street a building of the colonnaded Greek type fitted out with a new practical front for shop-window purposes; and this too is not unsymbolic in the field of education. M., who likes to make early start, observed a car with license-plate *U. S. Geological Survey 3040* setting out from the hotel at 7.30 A. M. "If the government's on the road, we ought to be too" was his comment. Nor would he pause, even to buy gasoline, until we reached the attractive little filling station of Mary Clark in Dundee. This is midway the marvellous concrete road that curls over the highlands between Lake Seneca and Lake Keuka. My host was depressed when Mrs. Clark and her assistant Ray Vaughn did not seem to think much of his castor oil lubricant. They thumbed it with care and said firmly they did not think it had enough body.

. . . On the way back from Lake Keuka my host, perhaps a little jealous of the admiration we had shown for New York, wished to take us through a corner of his native Pennsylvania. Seeking the right turn he was scanning all signs hastily as we passed. In the town of Waverly is a board which says *Lunchen 50*. "Fifty miles to Lunchen," he pondered innocently. "Where is that town, I don't see it on the map." We pointed out the rest of the legend to him: *Dinner 85, Overnight 1.00.*—As we hastened along the Susquehanna Valley a furious honking just behind alarmed us. Some secret guilt in M's bosom caused him to suppose it the police. He pulled over and slowed. A car rushed by, a large face thrust out of it, almost maniac with cordiality, and yelled "Hullo, Nassau County!" Our license number bore the same key-letters as the other's; and Livingston meeting Stanley in the bush could not have been better pleased. This, too, I felt was America.

THE OLD MANDARIN

Forgotten Adventurers

AFTER CORONADO, Spanish Exploration Northeast of New Mexico, 1696-1727. *Translated and edited by Alfred Barnaby Thomas. Tulsa: University of Oklahoma Press.* 1935. $3.50.

Reviewed by OLIVER LA FARGE

THE fondness for source material represents a special taste among gourmets of reading. Historians have to take it and like it, but not every layman will wade through all the details and forgotten matters for the pleasure of learning that Sir Richard Grenville chewed and swallowed a wine-glass in order to show the Spaniards what Englishmen were like, or that Villasur carried silver plate with him on an Indian-hunting expedition across unknown Western prairies and mountains. The reward is a special one; not so much the little facts, as the emergence in full round of people. Here are the actual words—in the particular book under consideration—of Spanish soldiers, pioneers, ranchers, of Apaches and Pueblo Indians, of viceroys, governors, and renegades, diaries and documents written for present use, betraying through official language and all formality the characters of the persons, and points of view which have vanished two centuries ago. Better than through any history, the strength and weakness of the later Spanish régime becomes clear; the hardiness in exploration, considerable courage, a broad view of the art of government, and that endless capacity for delaying, diddling, not doing the thing seen to be needful, which sapped and in time undermined an empire.

For a period of time one may live in a book like this, in a manner possible with few organized, coherent narratives. Life itself is formless in its detail, crises drag on, climaxes fail to develop, a man turns from courtship or fighting for his life to eat a square meal and buy some pocket-handkerchiefs. In a degree, source material follows this formula, without the conscious analysis and literary effort of "Ulysses." The pace is as slow as life, the happenings as commonplace and strange.

This particular book deals with a period of exploration, and more important, defense of the far northern border of an enormous empire, during a time which the provincial, Anglo-American view of our history totally ignores. That the West was discovered and travelled over long before Zebulon Pike or Lewis and Clark, that these men followed in the footsteps of French and Spanish, their trips made possible by their predecessors' work, that the rivers and mountains were named and mapped long before Platte, Canada, or the Rockies had been imagined, are factors which we are all too inclined to overlook.

With very few soldiers, a sparse popu-

(*Continued on page* 23)

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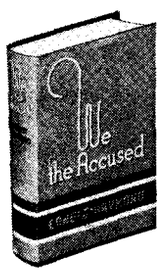
By ERNEST RAYMOND



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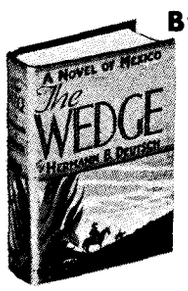

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Delayed Amends

FOR several weeks, now, ever since I answered an inquiry by W. P. *of New York City* as to a book "bearing on the art or pleasure of collecting or living with books," and answered it in such a fashion as to have called forth a deluge of letters from Clearing House readers, I've been meaning to give part of my space over to a discussion of Helen E. Haines's LIVING WITH BOOKS (Columbia University Press). I was left in no doubt by my correspondents as to the fact that this was the volume for which W. P. was hunting, and was filled with confusion by the knowledge that it had been lying at my elbow for days awaiting that free morning in which to read it which had never come round. I've had a chance now, however, to go through it and to discover for myself how well it merits the encomiums which have been pouring in upon it. The outgrowth of courses in book selection given at library schools, it embodies a ripe experience and presents it with enough specific detail to make it of the highest value to the librarian for whom it is primarily intended as well as of interest and profit to the general reader. After a brief introductory discussion of the reading habits and needs of the public Miss Haines proceeds to a study first, of books as tools of reference, then of the media through which they are appraised, next of their textual and physical aspects and of the methods through which they are produced and distributed, and finally, and at greatest length, takes up the various categories into which books fall. In this last section of her volume, which comprises fully half of it, she not only enumerates some of the more outstanding of the recent publications but places them in relation to the needs of the community and the individual, and does it all so pleasantly, with so nice a discrimination in her choice of titles and so rich a background against which to project them, as to make what she writes not only full of meat for the student or the student's helper but something for which the worker in her own field, to whom much of her material is necessarily familiar, will fall upon with gusto. All in all, LIVING WITH BOOKS, seems to me the most useful volume of the sort I have seen, so sound is it in its judgments, measured in its statements, and lucid in its arrangement. Miss Haines has furnished each chapter with excellent brief bibliographies.

Literature of the West

T. S. of Chicago, Ill., *wishes a list of references that will be helpful in preparing a paper on the Literature of the West. She is planning a discussion which is to present both the past and the present of the literature of that region.*

The West, of course, has its sections each of which has characteristics and history distinct from that of the others, and all of which have at one time or another been the romantic open spaces. I should think that the first thing for T. S. to do, by way of laying a foundation for more specific studies, would be to read such a book as THE REDISCOVERY OF THE FRONTIER (University of Chicago Press) by a scholar of her own City on the Plains, Percy H. Boynton. Mr. Boynton's book covers such ground as the frontier in literary criticism, the American pioneer in fiction, the immigrant pioneer in fiction, and the backtrailers in fact and fiction,—precisely the terrain on which I judge T. S. is supposed to work. Having read this she might turn to LITERARY CALIFORNIA (Harr Wagner), by E. S. Mighels, J. B. Horner's OREGON HISTORY AND EARLY LITERATURE (Portland: Gill), and as a gloss on these histories, to the anthology entitled WESTERN PROSE AND POETRY (Harpers), which R. A. Coleman has edited. There's still the Southwest to be covered and for that there's H. R. Greer's VOICES OF THE SOUTHWEST (Macmillan), L. W. Payne's SURVEY OF TEXAS LITERATURE (Rand), and, again as gloss, GOLDEN STALLION (Southwest Press), edited by D. M. Bushby.

And now we're backtrailing, for having started at the Coast I now arrive at the Middle West. The book to read on that is R. L. Rush's THE LITERATURE OF THE MIDDLE WESTERN FRONTIER (Columbia University Press). Well, now T. S. can begin to take up individual writers of the West—in its wide extent—such earlier writers as Bret Harte, Mark Twain, O. Henry, and later ones like Frank Norris, Hamlin Garland, Stewart Edward White, Mary Austin, Booth Tarkington, Meredith Nicholson, and Upton Sinclair. I am picking, as is plain to be seen, almost at random,

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 75)

ALDINGTON—"THE EATEN HEART"

For our bodies are we, and the "soul" is a metaphor
To express the unknown in ourselves,
As "God" is the unknown in the universe;
And primordial, urgent desire
That life should be continued.

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and I shall do hardly more than that with the writers of the moment. As a matter of fact, I think it's best to adopt the time-saving device of listing a few of the more outstanding novels of the last few years helter-skelter, with no comment for most, not even on their specific locale, since T. S. doubtless has that in mind. Here they are: MAIN STREET and BABBITT (Harcourt, Brace), by Sinclair Lewis, Willa Cather's MY ANTONIA, O, PIONEERS, and DEATH COMES FOR THE ARCHBISHOP (Knopf), Sherwood Anderson's WINESBURG, OHIO (Liveright), Edna Ferber's SO BIG (Doubleday, Doran) and CIMARRON (Doubleday, Doran), Phil Stong's STATE FAIR (Appleton-Century) and THE FARMER IN THE DELL (Harcourt, Brace), this last a story of Hollywood; Thames Williamson's story set in the Ozarks, THE WOOD'S COLT (Harcourt, Brace), Oliver La Farge's tale of Navajo Indian life, LAUGHING BOY (Houghton Mifflin), Louis Bromfield's THE FARM (Harpers), and Ruth Suckow's FOLKS (Farrar & Rinehart). A new novel has just appeared which should be of much interest to T. S., H. L. Davis's HONEY IN THE HORN, a Harper prize novel, which is a tale of pioneer Oregon, and there is about to be published an excellent pioneering tale of Texas entitled THE WIND BLEW WEST (Longmans, Green), by Edwin Lanham. In writing of the literature of the West T. S. ought not to forget, merely because they hold enormous publics, the group of writers which includes Kathleen and Charles G. Norris, Harold Bell Wright and Zane Grey.

Postscript to Negro Fiction

I'm enormously flattered to find that one of my readers thinks it worth while to send a telegram in regard to an omission. And it's a good book he's referring to, too. The message from James Harvey of South Carolina follows:

> Why omit Colemans DONT YOU WEEP DONT YOU MOURN from list recent Negro fiction. This novel critical success in America Great Britain India Africa. See splendid notice *Review* April twentieth. Please give it place it deserves in Negro fiction. Your omission of it will be noted by review regards who think it both good and important.

Rose Macaulay

The next question in order comes to me from *V. C. of Greenwood Mountain, Me.*, an inquiry as to whether any books or magazine articles have been written about Rose Macaulay. Yes, there's a chapter on "Miss Rose Macaulay" in Braybrooke's SOME GODDESSES OF THE PEN (Lippincott) and a study in Brimley Johnson's SOME CONTEMPORARY NOVELISTS, and Stuart P. Sherman has a discussion entitled "Rose Macaulay and Women" in CRITICAL WOODCUTS (Scribners). In EXTEMPORARY ESSAYS, edited by W. T. Hastings, pages 222-226 deal with Rose Macaulay and pages 56-61 of F. E. Schelling's APPRAISEMENT AND ASPERITIES is given over to a discussion of Potterism. V. C. wants to know also whether it would be possible to get in touch with Miss Macaulay personally through her publishers. I have no doubt that they would forward any letter directed to her in their care.

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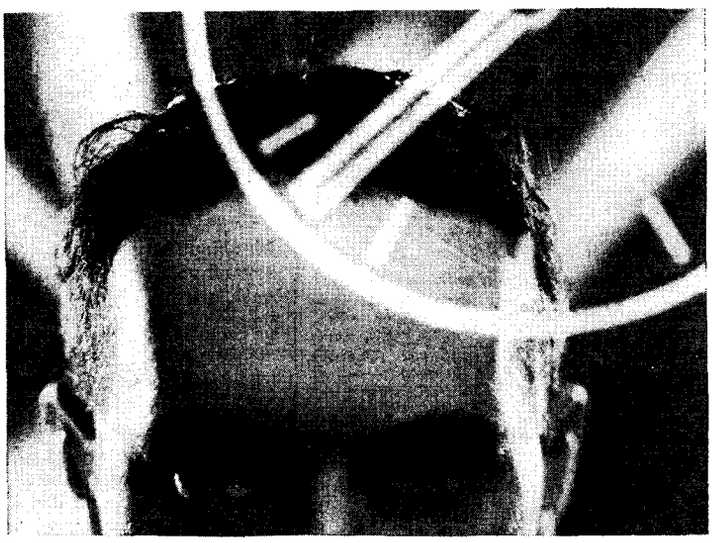
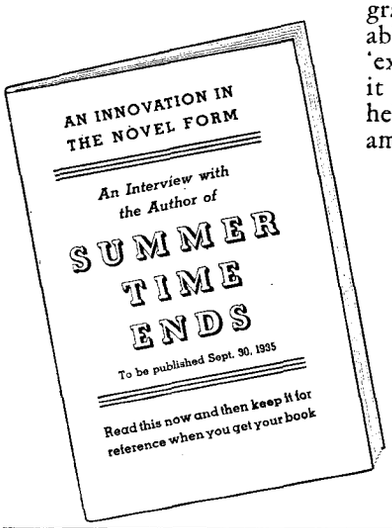
SUMMER TIME ENDS



ELEANOR CHILTON says: *Summer Time Ends* is original in the true sense of the word, and its economic implications are an integral part of its story — a story completely absorbing, exciting, moving and thought-provoking. It is the most interesting novel I have read for years.

HERBERT AGAR, author of *The People's Choice*, Pulitzer Prize Winner, says: *Summer Time Ends* is a grand piece of work—a magnificently readable novel and at the same time the only 'experimental' novel I have ever read where it seemed to me the experiment is a real help to the reader and not just a secret amusement for the author.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By Princess Marthe Bibesco. This modern romance of a French noblewoman torn between conventions and her love for a politician "is the stuff of which legends are made . . . it has both delicacy and strength."—N. Y. HERALD TRIBUNE. $2.50

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The PHŒNIX NEST

CONTEMPORARY POETRY: BY WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

THIS week I am going to give the poets a break—some by not reviewing their books, and some by printing their poems. This sounds almighty generous of me, but really I have been scared into it. I have just received the following letter from that rip-snorting son of the West, *Welborn Hope:*

> What sort of a backwoods farm-column are you running, anyway?
> You announced two years ago that you would print my poem, "Killers of The Old West." I've not seen it in print. You are always grumbling around, and raising hell with *The New Republic* for not printing your poem in the same generation in which it was accepted—what have you done with my poem? Using it in winter to stop a crack around the window? Chasing flies with it in summer?
> If I live as long as Edwin Markham—I will be 32, come next grass—you'll probably get around to printing it, and I'll have that to comfort me in old age.

That not only scared me, but really touched me. My heart is not entirely marble. The only thing I objected to was Mr. Hope's use of the word "always," in regard to *The New Republic.* I'm really not "grumbling around" "always"—only "most of the time."

KILLERS OF THE OLD WEST

The steel-nerved and magnanimous men,
Whose slayings are made legends now,
Romance wraps: they kill not again.
A special breed let us allow
Glory, for valor and the story.
Since now is born mythology,
Since now in beauty records gory
Take flight unto posterity,
Leave this not out: how one man died—
Finger and trigger blown away,
His gun fell cocked on the floor at his side.
Bless the precision of that play!
The bullet-honeycombed border hell
Has vanished, but strange beauty veils
The spot forever, while the yell
Of killer's triumph never fails
To yield a sound when twilights pass
On the green mossy buffalo-grass!

You may remember Mr. Hope's "We Met Osages." He writes from Ada, Oklahoma. Another Oklahoma poet is *S. C. Giesey,* also from Ada. I wonder has he finished his long poem on the Alamo upon which he was engaged some time ago? Here is his

CALIBAN UPON MOTH WINGS

Out from Oklahoma
In smooth, swooping falls, plunging always
Through dusky air, and I . . . and you . . .
Caliban and Miranda. Twilight weaves a misty web
About us, excluding delicately
The Island's electrics.

Once in Juarez
A girl, a blonde Spaniard, sang,
Wrapped in a shawl like silken flame,
Flinging La Golindrina to the bacchanals.
An ironic elf, I . . . Caliban . . .
Flung her a quarter.

D'you think the moth
Desires the star too much, or Ariel Miranda?
The discreet elite desire languishingly, but I
Paid for La Golindrina with a quarter.
I could pay for life with fifty cents,
I . . . Caliban.

The discreet elite
Tread measures alcoholically, en este mundo triador
Nada es verdad ni mentira. *Have you seen*
The moth wings broken? the discreet elite
Never break anything. . . . That girl
With broken wings in Juarez. . . .

Now that the movies are presenting *Helen Gahagan* in "She"—and a most beautiful woman she becomes!—perhaps the following lines inscribed to the memory of the late *Sir Rider Haggard* may fall aptly. The author is *James C. Rice.* The title of the poem is

ROMANZA IRREDENTA

Like building ants, the toiling years have made
A little hill of time whose piling sands
Begin to bury dreams I cherished once
Of flaming deeds astride the Afric lands.
Yet still, I hear the impi's thundering note
Resound like rhythm from a tortured drum;
And still descry aasvogels idly float
Above the feast where Zulu bids them come.
Zimbabwe, loit'ring still, in ancient pride
Her epoch chilled—she sees the death-morn rise—
Flouts the new age—and flouting dares abide,
Beneath the Bechuana's darkling skies.
Unholy Tchaka's beard—by this I swore
To keep the glittering faith you vouchsafed me;
And Allan living drew your breath, and more,
It filtered far beyond the English sea.

Yours was a faith I found it hard to keep
Beset by wheels and all machines imply;
Faith is a pulse that soon forgets to leap
In market-place or seat of industry.
I tried to match those giant steps of yours—
Found early flagging taunts the untutored stride.
I tired on veldts, on kopjes, even moors.
You strengthened me when walking there beside.
There is no clinging savor of the past,
The future knows no salt to call its own.
Romance betook itself with you, the last
True knight it knew—like you is gone.

I can't tell you exactly what this next one means, that *Kenneth Slade Alling* sent me long ago; I can only say that I call it most certainly poetry:

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Though the proud, silver feet of the beautiful prancers
Kept step with my step as we danced as twined dancers,
I learned all the questions and none of the answers.

Delight was the earth where the root grew of sorrow,
Root rivering out in the tree of tomorrow,
And the burning bright apples the poorest could borrow.

And here are three pithy pronouncements from *George Meason Whicher:*

I.
CRITIQUE MANQUÉ

Long years in money-grubbing sunk
Cries Poros: "History is bunk!"
Well, such a verdict holds no mystery;
When, where, and how learned Poros history?

II.
DOUBLE CAREER

A colleague (we withhold his name)
As Poet-Scholar has a fame.
Poets, who find him dull and worse,
Think him a Scholar, writing verse.
But he's no scholar; his blunders show it.
So scholars conclude he must be a Poet!

III.
ON A CERTAIN PEDAGOGIST

"Who can, will do; who can't, will teach."
The world applauds Shaw's caustic speech.
But Proser proves: Who fails in each,
May still teach teachers how to teach.

Also I like *Arthur W. Bell's* verses, only I have quite a number on hand and must choose from among them

APOLOGIA

The Bard in revelry drank deep, but then,
Imagine such an errant fancy free
Of every fetter of sobriety
To soar on high, to sink, and soar again
Between the limits of the sty and sky;
Imagine too his deep discerning eye
Acquiring from the grape a double vision
With which to watch the motley crowd go by,
The pageant of the human comedy,
The king and knave, philosopher and clown,
With lucid pause to jot a fragment down
In deft, sure strokes of masterly precision;
Attaining a perspective all divine
From spurious refreshment of the vine.
His certain end appears the tavern floor,
Yet how shall we condemn his call of, "More!"
In such debauch what chance to drink his fill
Or slake a thirst unquenchable until,
Blinded by sights no mortal eye can bear,
Strangled with words no mortal tongue can utter,
Enraptured, wavering, he gains the door
And sinks to cool oblivion in the gutter.

In conclusion I wish to call your attention to the fact that *James Stephens,* the famous Irish poet, lately arrived on the *Normandie,* will read from his volumes of verse at a Poetry Recital on Sunday afternoon, September 15th, at four o'clock, in National Poetry Center, located in the RCA building of Rockefeller Center at 50th Street. Admission one dollar.

George Greyhawk, being an Indian, knew all about the birds and the trees and the great out-ot-doors . . . but when he fell in love at first sight with the pretty information clerk in the great New York department store, he didn't know what to do. A touching, heart-stirring romance. At all bookstores. $2.

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WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT:

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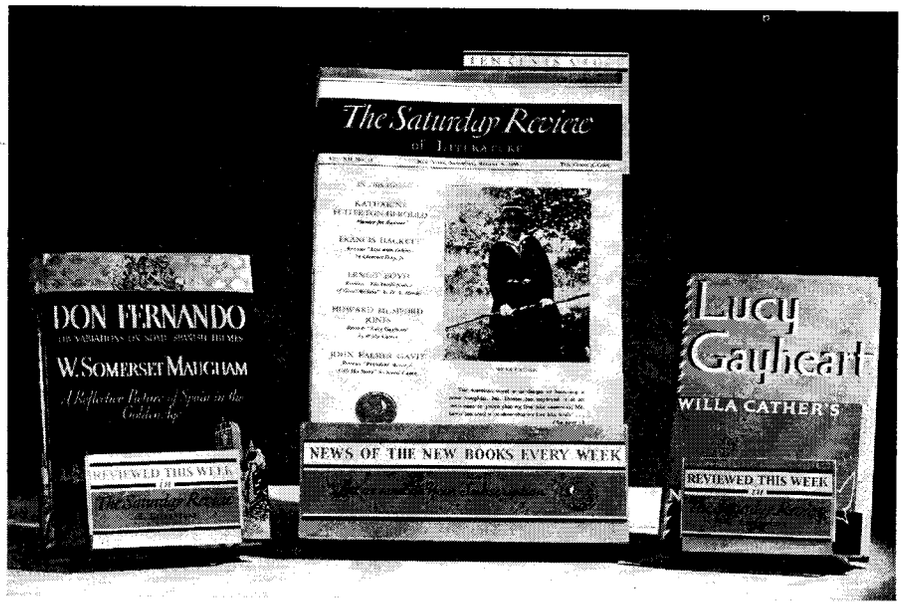

Every mail is bringing in more orders for the SRL's new metal display unit pictured above. Have you ordered one for your bookshop? The price is only 75 cents, postpaid, for the three pieces, and increased bookstore sales for the Review prove that it is as useful as it is decorative. BOOKSTORE DEPT., The Saturday Review, 25 West 45th St., New York City.

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The Amen Corner

"And of Soueraynte a noble pamphelet."
—Skelton, *The Garlande of Laurell.*[1]

The Oxonian has always had a weakness for pamphlets. You can have a great many of them at small expense, they can be read at a sitting, and by means of them you can have a convenient library on a wide variety of subjects. For a time many publishers seemed to feel like the author of a production called *Fysshynge with Angle,* published in 1496, who explains, according to that fascinating work the *Oxford English Dictionary:*[1] "That this present treatyse sholde not come to the hondys of eche ydle persone whyche wolde desire it, yf it were emprynted allone by itself & put in a lytyll plaunflet, therefore I have compyled it in a greter volume of dyuerse bokys."

But the Oxford University Press has always been wiser and has never ceased to publish the most instructive and often entertaining pamphlets by celebrated scholars, scientists and statesmen to meet every occasion.

These reflections were started by the appearance of three most timely pamphlets in rapid succession. In *Then and Now: The Changes of the Last Fifty Years*[2] we have Mr. Gilbert Murray (whose new translation of *The Seven Against Thebes*[3] we mentioned last month) appearing in the character of Rip Van Winkle. (He actually appears as one might expect, as Epimenides, Rip's Greek prototype.)

He concludes "that all our other uncertainties depend on one great unanswered problem: Can our Western Civilization make the effort necessary to get rid of war or can it not?"

The same problem is dealt with from another angle by the Marquis of Lothian in his striking *Pacifism is Not Enough, Nor Patriotism Either.*[4] His significant conclusion is "that events are forcing us to action far more rapidly than most people realize," owing to "the re-emergence of the fatal military time-table as a factor in policy."

Already the situation has been brought home to the world at large by the Abyssinian crisis; and the Oxford University Press will publish on the 12th a pamphlet on *Abyssinia and Italy,* drawn up by the Information Section of the Royal Institute of International Affairs and giving the factual background in a nutshell.

Politics alone however, do not hold the field. In the current *Bulletin*[5] of the Oxford Press are *Hamlet the Man*[6] by Elmer Edgar Stoll and *Problems in Experimental Embryology*[7] by Julian Huxley.

Language, of course, in view of Oxford's pre-eminence in the Dictionary field,[8] is a frequent subject. Take, for example, *The Best English: A Claim for the Superiority of Received Standard English*[9] by H. C. Wyld, with *Some Notes of Mr. Gladstone's Pronunciation* thrown in. (It appears the G.O.M. made a gramophone record for the late Thomas A. Edison); or *"Oxford" English,*[10] by Dr. R. W. Chapman, proving what all Oxford men know, that there is no such thing.

Which reminds us of the new *Dictionary of Modern American Usage*[11] by H. W. Horwill.

THE OXONIAN.

(1) Article Pamphlet in the *Oxford English Dictionary,* 13 vols., $125.00. Write for prospectus and convenient payment plan. 114 Fifth Avenue. (2) 70c. (3) $1.00. (4) 75c. (5) Ask them to put you on their list to receive it regularly. (6) 85c. (7) 35c. (8) Write for a descriptive list of the Oxford Reference Shelf. (9) $1.00. (10) 85c. (11) $3.25. Write for circular with two specimen pages.

The New Books

Drama

VICTORIA REGINA. By Laurence Housman. Scribners. 1935. $3.50.

A biography in dramatic form is something of a novelty, but that is exactly what Mr. Housman has produced by bringing into one volume all his little plays in which Queen Victoria plays a part. With one exception they have all been obtainable before and are already familiar, but it is extremely interesting now again to read them in a properly chronological sequence and to see how exactly and how economically they build up, as a series, just the portrait of the Queen that Mr. Housman intends to convey. It would be so easy and so tempting to allow dramatic necessity at some point in some one of the thirty plays to outweigh that consistency of character which the biographer demands, but never once does Mr. Housman depart from his studied interpretation of Victoria's personality. She is a completely credible and sustained creation, less smug than Lytton Strachey's, less placid than Mr. Benson's. It is inevitable that some of the plays should be better than others. A few of them lack dramatic point and seem to exist in the series only to fill in a gap. The majority, however, possess a well-rounded artistic unity, and many of them, especially those which picture the Queen in her later days, could be charmingly and effectively presented in one of the little theaters.

Mr. E. H. Shepard, whose genius for humorously recreating the atmosphere of former ages is already well known to lovers of Pepys and Johnson, has contributed to the volume a full-page pen and ink drawing to accompany each play, and a generous number of vignettes almost equally attractive. There is not a failure among them, and one or two are matchless examples of witty illustration. The angularity and heaviness of Lord Kitchener, as he explains to the Queen his reasons for desecrating the Mahdi's tomb, are unforgettable.

C. D. A.

Fiction

ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE. By Lewis Browne. Macmillan. 1935. $2.

From most standpoints, Mr. Browne's apocryphal novel of the life of the Magdalene is entirely unsuccessful. Unhampered by factual material—for the Biblical references to Mary are sparse—he has achieved neither of two possible desiderata: a picture of the times that immediately preceded the Crucifixion; a work of the imagination that might have brought to life a few of the more important figures of the time.

Mary herself, he pictures as the child of a demented cobbler, raised in abject poverty and degradation and animated only by one desire—to follow the Nazarene who once had preached in her native village. In the pursuit of this faith, the despised and undernourished daughter of a social outcast wanders over the countryside, is waylaid and sold into whoredom, escapes within two days, and joins the wretched band of fisherfolk that follows the new prophet. There follows the passage of the pilgrims to Bethany and Jerusalem, where the Christ drives the money-changers from the Temple, disputes with the rabbis, and, off-stage, is betrayed, captured, and crucified. Jesus himself, Mr. Browne treats with understandable temerity; He appears in person but a very few times and His remarks are commonplace. What we see of Him has none of the majesty He acquires in the New Testament narrative, none of the personal

(*Continued on page* 22)

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE BATTLE OF BASINGHALL STREET *E. Phillips Oppenheim* (Little, Brown: $2.)	Devilish directors of predatory corporation exposed in all their villainy by debonair son of dead ex-director.	Like advt. trailer behind airplane it moves swiftly and readably but you see through every letter.	Oppenhokum
CALAMITY COMES OF AGE *Gregory Baxter* (Macaulay: $2.)	Sudden and deadly plunge of airman with fair passenger starts Peter Osborne on perilous adventures.	A mixture of mystery and Ruritanian romance with missing crown jewel, long lost princess, and such familiar trappings.	Soporific
THE SKULL OF THE WALTZING CLOWN *Harry Stephen Keeler* (Dutton: $2.)	Shirt-salesman "nephew" tells usurious Uncle tall tales and reads strange letters.	No murders, no sleuthing—only the marvellous Keeler imagination and lurid lingo.	Mi-gosh!

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Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

THE genial mug of Quercus, the elder, will be missing for a few days from the dizzy catacombs of the SRL. The guy has taken a run out powder leaving the younger, but less able flock of Quercuses to handle his pillar for this week. And like the Emperor Haile Selassie's retort to Mussolini we're going to show you a thing or three.

☞A tome of nifty proportions that'll soon hit all the bookshops is *I Write What I Please* by Walter Duranty. This able newshound has knocked together into 375 pages his fifteen years of news recording for the New York Times on Russian affairs. It packs the McCoy. It should peddle at a fair clip if good books by good newspaper men are any criterion. Witness Stanley Walker, Vincent Sheean, Walter Millis, etc., etc. S & S are paying for the printing. . . . ☞The prize boner of the year goes to Fay King, a Hearst philosopher, who does a strip with gags for the Chicago *American*. In the July 26 issue of said rag the King gal illustrated and went tony on the value of T. E. Shaw's autograph. The first two drawings showed the hill-side home of Shaw and the author in his Arabic and English uniforms; the last is a reproduction of an autograph with, "This is how 'Lawrence of Arabia' signed T. Edward Shaw in 'The Seven Pillars of Wisdom.'" The signature reproduced was George H. Doran's. . . . ☞Northern Michigan landscape has gone literati with the roadside book stall of Joseph C. Meredith of Charlotte stationed east of Indian Trial Lodge. Smart fellow—when you consider that 24% of Michigan folks are without public library service. Which leads us to this colossal crack: Who will be the genius that'll pull off this same stunt in West Virginia where 88% of the population are deprived of public library service? Or Arkansas with 85%; Georgia with 71%; Mississippi with 69%; Alabama with 68%. . . . George Pearse Ennis, an old pal of old Quercus, has moved his art school from upper Fifth Ave. to down around the famous "Hell's Kitchen" Section, 628 West 24th Street. We know the spot and it's a natural for an art school. Waterfront, ships, longshoremen. The Fall term begins Sept. 23rd.

☞But what we've got to stick to is books. With Ethiopia in the headlines Lippincott crashes through with a book about this African country, *Burners of Men* by Marcel Griaule . . . and speaking about books in the news Macmillan will have *Albert, Third King of The Belgians* out in October; Vanguard Press offers this week Lapolla's *The Grand Gennaro*, a tale about the Italians in America; Morrow with a tome on politics, *Our Enemy The State* by Albert Jay Nock; Scribner on Russia with *The Russian Soul and Revolution* by Fedor Stepun; Stokes pulls off *War—No Glory, No Profit, No Need* by Norman Thomas; Doubleday, Doran on Japan with *War and Diplomacy in the Japanese Empire* by Sterling Tatsuji Takeuchi; Harper's on Mexico with *Chaos in Mexico* by Charles S. MacFarland. . . . All this proves my friends that the moment News breaks there is an alert American publisher out with a tome giving the "inside stuff" that makes it news. . . . Society notes: M. Lincoln Schuster off for Martha's Vineyard. ☞The Sinclair Lewises to England. ☞Ogden Nash and brood at Boar's Head, N. H., until the leaves change. ☞From Europe Fannie Hurst, John O'Hara and Glenway Wescott. ☞Flash! Labor Day Week-End has ended. Contact—for the old snozzola and the *grindstone*.

☞Few letters have ever pleased poor Old Q as much as the following from John Bennett—author of *Master Skylark* and other well-loved books and verses:—

SIR:—Being far in the sticks and little acquainted with New York, today, I have not the slightest idea in the world as to who you are. But I read your columns with interest and pleasure as well as profit and occasionally high entertainment.

Out of your pages of August 17th I gleaned some of the purest and highest entertainment and comfort that have come my way in many days.

Your handy paragraph: i. e.: "There has been more hysteria and horsewind in literary criticism the past 15 years than in a whole century preceding," so exactly expresses my opinion that I am impelled to intrude long enough to say "Thank you for the truth at last!"

I do not know your age; I know my own very well; and I should like to think I might enlist myself among those who like yourself are "far too old now to kid themselves about the books they really find readable."

Can you not start an independent order of readers who have arrived at safe years for indiscretion, and read what they damn please irrespective of the horsewind and ballyhoo which roar in the market-place?

I should like to sign up for charter membership in some such disorganization, whose only motto should be common sense.

Pardon the intrusion for the sake of my sincere appreciation, and believe me,

Cordially yours,

JOHN BENNETT.

Charleston, S. C.

☞Stokes's *The Politician: His Habits, Outcries and Protective Coloration* (by J. H. Wallis, Sept. 16) sounds like pungent stuff. ☞Quercus was horrified to see a black Chevrolet sedan on Fifth Avenue with Harvard collegiate posters on windshield and back window. ☞We had hoped that at least at Harvard people didn't advertise like that. ☞Amused to hear the Wine Steward of a very famous hostelry deplore the terrible meal selected by a distinguished litterateur.

"He drank Tom Collins all through dinner," moaned the Wine Steward; "it was like seeing a beautiful library with nothing in it but Ruby Ayres and the tabloids."

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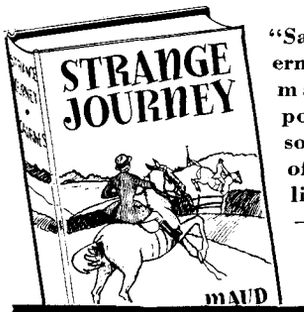

"Saucy . . . modern . . . gives many a sly poke at the social foibles of the English gentry." —*Saturday Review of Literature.*

STRANGE JOURNEY

By Maud Cairnes

"This story of the adventures of two Englishwomen whose minds temporarily exchanged bodies . . . is freshly written and pleasantly entertaining. It will be fun for anybody who is tired of being himself." —*N. Y. Times Book Review*

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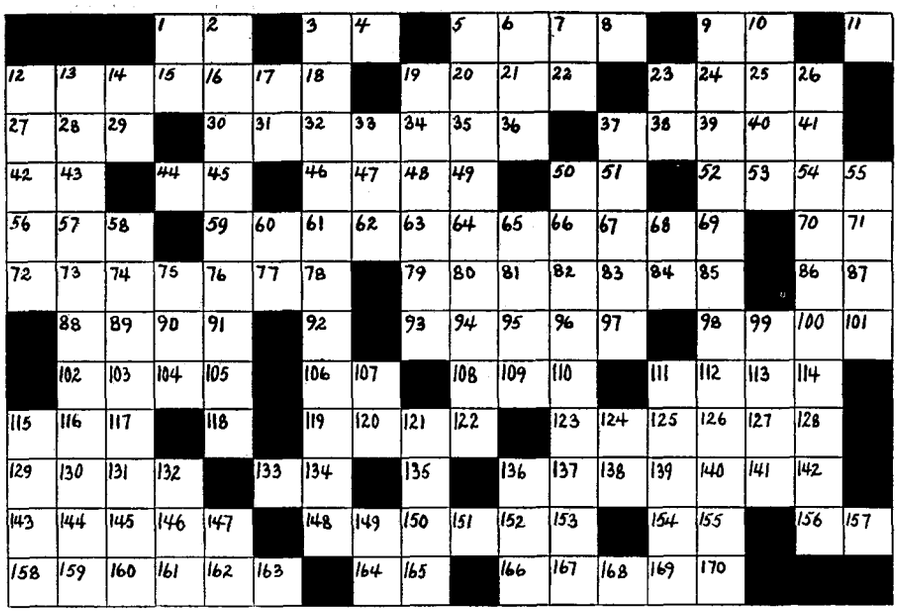
Double-Crostics: No. 76

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY



DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-three words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Unless otherwise indicated, the author is English or American.

DEFINITIONS

I. By which.

II. Magic ship of Freyr (Norse myth).

III. Fuss, worry.

IV. A giant hunter of Boeotia (Greek myth.).

V. Vain boasting.

VI. Alberich's helmet (Norse myth).

VII. Insect.

VIII. Dangerous.

IX. Taunted.

X. Bunk (slang).

XI. Exacerbates.

XII. Oratorio by Mendelssohn.

XIII. Petty quarrels.

XIV. Character in "Alice in Wonderland."

XV. Intimate blending.

XVI. Collection of English miracle plays.

XVII. English novelist (1884-——).

XVIII. A mortuary roll.

XIX. Character in "Henry IV."

XX. Valor, ability.

XXI. Worked into a fabric.

XXII. Women's magazine (1830).

XXIII. Last Dutch Governor of New Netherland.

WORDS

64 70 84 32 149 143 47 156 57

170 126 118 22 76 146 50 33 40 133 122

79 71 131 30 8 157

73 60 1 9 83

66 155 128 106 3 87 134 27 92 147 29

86 135 125 51 28 110 77 104

105 164 74 98 130 41

81 55 113 160 163

97 123 158 82 58 24 49

68 144 91 12 115

78 168 11 39 154 165 116 148 62

161 141 167 23 95 38

59 138 25 96 19

132 20 63 166 142 94

21 15 37 127 85 10 145 35 99 65 139

159 109 121 43 100 34 152

17 129 42 72 48 112 54 44 124 117

89 111 6 67

107 31 5 18 153 80 26 46

53 162 151 88 119 13 136

14 7 137 90 45 52 93 101 36

56 103 140 16 4

150 114 61 69 120 169 102 75 2 108

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 16 of this issue.

The New Books

(*Continued from page* 20)

magnetism that must have been His in life.

As a story based on a great legend, "All Things Are Possible" has carried over little of the wealth of the original; as a piece of work in its own right, executed in a diluted version of the King James translation, it has little solidity and only slight appeal.

A. C. B.

Miscellaneous

NEW VALUES IN MUSIC APPRECIATION. By Laurence Adler. Roerich Museum Press. 1935.

This book is concerned less with music appreciation than with teaching music appreciation. It is philosophical in approach, opening with a discussion of aesthetics and closing with a chapter on the place of music among the arts. Between his indefinite beginning and his conjectural conclusion, the author discusses melody, harmony, and historical movements. His analysis of themes is suggestive, but even here—and still more elsewhere—the application of his generalizations to particular compositions reduces itself to a matter of taste, the individuality of which is unsuccessfully concealed by a veneer of pedantic dogma.

G. S.

THE ORDINARY DIFFICULTIES OF EVERYDAY PEOPLE. By John Rathbone Oliver. Knopf. 1935. $2.75.

"The title of this book is almost sufficient to describe it." So the publishers tell us, and they should know. But one wishes that they or the author had told us who and where are these Everyday People whose difficulties are so very ordinary that, with a simplicity and confidence that would be disarming if it were not so exasperating, they can be readily comprehended and dissolved in less than three hundred pages. But if we do not know them Dr. Oliver does, and having bravely chosen all of his Mr. Everydayman's life for his field, he steers him through the shallow shoals of his difficulties with the airy skill of an amateur yachtsman in a safe little harbor.

And there are plenty of shoals, if you start with the first despairing wail and carry on into what is too often a "cannibalistic" old age. Money difficulties apparently do not belong to the ordinary, for Mr. Everydayman's problems concern not the paying of bills, but his adjustments with his "rectors" and "masters" at prep school, his social and sports hazards at the University (but don't risk coeducation, my dear), his pre-medic and medical education, and even the weighty question of his future wife's virginity—all of these and many more of the same sort are the true difficulties which Dr. Oliver sees strewing the path of Everyday People. For eighteen pages Mr. Everydayman turns into a girl, but this is probably enough since "to women the attraction of matrimony seems to be irresistible," and the author has a lot to say about marriage. And what he says has all the flavor of one's kindly bachelor uncle whose satisfaction in his own celibacy is

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charmingly heightened by periodic wistful dreaming by his autumnal fireside.

Dr. Oliver combines in an odd degree the offices of physician and priest. He scatters a little obvious medical information throughout his pages, and even enlivens them here and there with racy little case histories, but his science somehow smacks of pre-war medicine. As for religion, he uses it warily as one who sadly recognizes the weakness of its hold, and he plainly belongs to the group to whom tolerance is mightier than faith and whose test of the modern spirit is the ability to speak frankly—but gently—of sex.

M. U.

Forgotten Adventurers

(*Continued from page* 14)

lation, doubtful Indian allies, and far from doubtful Indian enemies within and outside their borders, Spain held a staggering area of country, and probably prevented the extermination by wilder tribes of that unique civilization we call Pueblo. Their expeditions travelled to Wyoming, Nebraska, and Kansas, and it was with the French, not the English, that they fought openly or through the channels of diplomacy for domination of the West.

All that effort, courage, and skill has left behind it no visible trace beyond the immediate frontiers of the Southwest. A hundred years later the dry-rot had fully done its work; Mexico north of the Rio Grande crumbled at a touch. There is no trace of Spanish rule in Wyoming, even the names are wiped away. It is as though the struggle had taken place in another world, the very Indians seems to belong to another race, viewed through Spanish eyes.

Yet it was not waste effort, nor without importance to North America. That in, at least, part of New Mexico and Arizona an old combination of Spanish and Indian civilization is dominant today; that the Pueblos still exist in their own pattern; that the Spanish tongue and Spanish songs are still heard in these arid mountains, to the great enrichment of our monotone culture; all this is due to these forgotten governors and captains and the ranchers who brought a gun, a helmet, a leather jacket, three horses, and a mule to go on a raid against the Pawnees.

To this material, Mr. Thomas has added a very compact, clear, and readable introduction—forty-nine pages containing a marvellous amount of information without seeming hurried or crowded—and an excellent set of notes. The total result is an important addition to our history, and a rounded picture of a forgotten empire which reminds one slightly of the later Roman struggle to cling to the distant frontier of Hadrian's wall.

Oliver La Farge is an archaeologist and a novelist who in his "Laughing Boy" and other tales turned his scientific knowledge into the stuff of fiction. He has worked much in the Spanish American field, not long since having spent considerable time in Guatemala. He is now in New Mexico.

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ADVERTISEMENTS will be accepted in this column for things wanted or unwanted; personal services to let or required; literary or publishing offers not easily classified elsewhere; miscellaneous items appealing to a select and intelligent clientèle; exchange and barter of literary property or literary services; jobs wanted, houses or camps for rent, tutoring, travelling companions, ideas for sale; communications of a decorous nature; expressions of opinion (limited to fifty lines). All advertisements must be consonant with the purposes and character of The Saturday Review. Rates: 7 cents per word, including signature. Count two additional words for Box and Number. Payment in full must be received ten days in advance of publication. Address Personal Dept., Saturday Review, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.

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